

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

LOCATION: RIVERSIDE MARRIOTT
3400 Market Street
Riverside, California 922501

DATE AND TIME: Friday, August 28, 2009
1 p.m. to 4:34 p.m.

REPORTED BY: JUDITH W. GILLESPIE, CSR, RPR
(No. 3710)

JOB NO.: 68446JG

A P P E A R A N C E S

MEMBERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING

ACTING CHAIR THOMAS ACUNA	Transportation/Rights of Way
DON MABEN	Elected Official
RANDY BANIS	Public-at-Large
MEG GROSSGLASS	Public-at-Large
RICHARD HOLIDAY	Recreation
RICHARD RUDNICK	Renewable Resources
PATRICK LLOYD GUNN	Wildlife
RONALD JOHNSTON	Public-at-Large
JAMES FITZPATRICK	Public-at-Large
BRAD MITZELFELT	Elected Official

STAFF PRESENT:

STEVE BORCHARD, District Manager, California Desert District
JACK HAMBY, Associate District Manager, CDD
STEVE RAZO, External Affairs Officer, CDD
DAVID BRIERY, External Affairs Specialist, CDD
ALAN STEIN, Asst. District Manager, Resources, CDD
ROXIE TROST, Barstow Field Officer Manager
HECTOR VILLALOBOS, Ridgecrest Field Office Manager
LINN GUM, Ridgecrest Field Office Asst. Manager
VICKI WOOD, El Centro Field Office Manager
JOHN KALISH, Palm Springs Field Office Manager
MIKE AHRENS, Needles Recreation Wilderness Chief

I-N-D-E-X

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1 Riverside, CA

Friday, August 28, 2009

2
3
4 **P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S**

5
6 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I would like to
7 welcome everybody to the California District Desert
8 Advisory Council meeting. I'm Tom Acuna, acting chair
9 today, and I represent the renewable energy position
10 on the board.

11 Let's start off with our pledge of
12 allegiance, and Don, can you please lead us?

13 (Pledge of allegiance led by Don Maben).

14 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you, Don.
15 Appreciate that. Okay.

16 So we've got a busy little agenda today,
17 and let's start off with introductions. Lloyd,
18 perhaps you could give us our start.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: My name is Lloyd
20 Gunn. I'm with the Society For Conservation of
21 Bighorn Sheep, also active in the Desert Committee,
22 which is part of the Sierra Club. And I have been out
23 in the desert many years doing projects.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: My name is
25 Richard Holiday. I'm a board member of the American

1 Sand Association and on the DAC subgroup for the
2 Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, and I represent
3 recreation.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: I'm Richard
5 Rudnick. I'm rancher in the Western Mojave and am
6 representing renewable resources.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: Don Maben, Second
8 District Supervisor for Kern County, representing
9 local government.

10 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Steve Borchard. I'm
11 BLM District Manager for the Desert District

12 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Tom Acuna,
13 renewable energy.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: Ron Johnston.
15 Is that working?

16 My name is Ron Johnston. I represent the
17 public interest. I live in San Diego and Joshua Tree
18 and I'm for the desert enjoyment, protection and
19 usage.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: My name is Randy
21 Banis. I represent the public-at-large on the DAC.
22 I'm a resident of Leona Valley just on the edge of the
23 Desert District, and this is my second year of the
24 first term.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Meg

1 Grossglass. I'm with CORBA, the Off-Road Business
2 Association, and I represent the public-at-large. I
3 do marketing, media, and lands use for them.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: I'm Brad
5 Mitzelfelt, San Bernardino County Supervisor, First
6 District. I represent a large area of the Mojave,
7 everything from the Victor Valley to -- well, most
8 everything from the Victor Valley to Twentynine Palms
9 to Needles to Red Mountain on the Kern County line,
10 bordering Arizona and Nevada, and all the way to State
11 Line, Baker, Trona. And good to be here.

12 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thanks, folks, for
13 your introductions. And let's move on to the last
14 meeting notes and see if we can't approve of them.
15 The last time we met, it was March 21st in Barstow
16 area. And we had some meeting notes that were sent
17 out. Do I have -- do we want to discuss those meeting
18 notes? Are there any changes you would like to
19 suggest?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: Motion to
21 approve.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Second.
23 (Voice vote taken.)

24 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That passes. We
25 are good to go. All right.

1 So let's take a look at the agenda today,
2 all of us, and work our way through it. In theory we
3 are going to end this at 4:30 today. And we are going
4 to talk a little bit about the public questions that
5 may not be on the agenda today. We are going to go
6 through the state director's report, the district
7 manager's report. We are going to hear field office
8 reports. We will have a break roughly around 3
9 o'clock. We will be hearing from the Union Pacific
10 Railroad and move on to the Wild Horse and Burro
11 Update and then we will adjourn.

12 At this time are there any thoughts on the
13 agenda from the Advisory Council? Anything you would
14 like to add?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Just an
16 opportunity for Council members to make a report if
17 they have items.

18 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That would be good.
19 So let's start from my right and work my way this way.
20 Asking folks do you have anything you want to share or
21 make a report on?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: No.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Not at this point.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Not at this
25 point.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Negative.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: Nope.

3 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Now you are going
4 to find out today that this would be my first time
5 chairing, so if I make some mistakes, just point them
6 out and I will try to rectify it.

7 I'm looking at tomorrow's meeting, too,
8 where we will hear an update on the renewable RETI
9 and REAT initiatives.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: I don't have
11 anything to add at this point.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: I brought it up
13 because I do. Sorry for the buzz kill, but I have a
14 couple items. Thank you for just a moment of your
15 time.

16 It's been a busy time for me over the last
17 six months or so since our last meeting, and I wanted
18 to alert the DAC members to some documents and some of
19 my work that might be of interest.

20 First of all, there has been a -- there is
21 discussions going on throughout the desert about a
22 second or new Desert Wilderness and Land Preservation
23 Recreation Act that will potentially be introduced
24 into Congress by Senator Feinstein. It's a large bill
25 containing many different kinds of proposals regarding

1 lands in the desert.

2 Some of those proposals would set aside a
3 few new wilderness areas. And in working with all of
4 the parties in trying to identify which routes on the
5 ground might be affected by the wilderness proposals,
6 I organized and conducted a small survey of four of
7 the then-proposed wilderness areas. Some of these are
8 no longer under consideration, but nonetheless, if
9 anyone is interested, for the public this report could
10 be downloaded easily at deathvalley.com/2009survey. I
11 have fliers with this address that I am happy to pass
12 out, but I'm afraid I don't have enough copies for
13 everyone in the room.

14 The second item that I have been working on
15 is folks in the district and many folks at the table
16 and some in the audience know of my desire to work on
17 informing the public of the motorized route network
18 that is open and available to them in the California
19 desert and other back country areas of the state. We
20 have had a lot of changes on the ground over the last
21 ten years. Those changes aren't reflected on maps yet
22 and aren't reflected on GPSs by the company that
23 provides that data.

24 I have an initiative that I'm developing
25 and drafting that would be a three-prong approach.

1 I'm looking to first preserve -- to better protect the
2 recreating public with accurate route information, to
3 better protect sensitive resources by protecting route
4 travel, and to better protect the remaining motorized
5 recreation opportunities we have by increasing
6 compliance with route designation.

7 There are three ways to do that. Two are
8 regularly undertaken. One is accurate on-the-ground
9 signing, and there are efforts being undertaken
10 throughout the district on that. Accurate maps.
11 There are some being produced by -- under production
12 by the government and others being produced by
13 "Friends of" groups. But a third possibility is to
14 generate and produce a database of these routes
15 available for GPS download by the public.

16 And let me just say that this is not rocket
17 science. This is stuff that people are already doing.
18 The data and the information that recreationists are
19 sharing among themselves using tools like Google maps,
20 Google Earth and their GPS programs, it's staggering
21 what people are doing. And I want to prepare our
22 route information for the 21st century. And I have a
23 draft document that I would like input, comments on,
24 and as time goes on, I would like to revise this
25 document into a plan. This document is able to be

1 downloaded by the public for their comment at
2 deathvalley.com/route_info.

3 My last item, please, is I would like to
4 suggest that the Desert District consider sending out
5 reports in pdf format rather than Word, not
6 necessarily for -- not because some of those doc.exe
7 files have been tough to open, but I think it's a
8 better practice to be distributing pdf files rather
9 than Word for the security issues. It's much more
10 difficult to alter and move pdf's around the wrong
11 way. It's much easier to do that with Word documents
12 and although we have an original to prove what is
13 right, there are still headaches that have to be
14 squashed when things are disseminated in the original
15 form.

16 Other than that, I appreciate that. Thank
17 you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: I don't have
19 anything, sorry.

20 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any
21 comments from the public that they would like to add
22 to the agenda? Would you state your name, please.

23 MS. RUSCHE: Margit Chiriaco Rusche. I
24 wanted to address this board, having served on the
25 Desert Advisory Council some years ago when the

1 utility corridors were being suggested as part of the
2 Desert Plan.

3 I thought it was important to attend and
4 bring to your attention the vast solar farms being
5 suggested for the desert. And I'm questioning how
6 these will be incorporated into the utility corridor
7 plans for the desert lands. I realize that these
8 farms take up huge amounts of land and for what the
9 resulting solar is sometimes, I think we need to
10 relook at that. Please consider this query for your
11 review.

12 Perhaps you may already have a decision on
13 this. If so, please let me know. The solar farms
14 will be large properties if they are to generate any
15 alternative energy, and this must be considered in the
16 bigger picture for the desert lands. And thank you
17 all for your concern and presence that we all share as
18 responsible citizens and owners, and I have copies.

19 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you, Margit,
20 and I think the agenda shows this is public questions
21 for items not on the agenda.

22 MS. RUSCHE: Is this on the agenda?

23 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I hope you will be
24 here tomorrow.

25 MS. RUSCHE: Probably not.

1 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Maybe after the
2 meeting today you can hook up with some of the BLM
3 folks and they can give you some insight on how they
4 are doing on that matter.

5 MS. RUSCHE: Is the Board actually
6 taking up a formal position on the solar?

7 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think tomorrow we
8 are going to hear more about those solar corridors,
9 and there may be some decision or some recommendation
10 from us.

11 MS. RUSCHE: That will be fine.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: The District
13 Advisory Committee did take a unanimous stand on the
14 general position paper regarding solar development.
15 And it was taken at or around my first meeting last
16 year. Would that have been in -- a July or August
17 meeting, I believe.

18 But those who tend the records of the DAC
19 have that letter. I have a copy of that letter. And
20 the fact that it was unanimous I think might be --
21 whether it directly addresses your points, you should
22 take a look at that and see if we can better refine
23 our comments.

24 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I would add to
25 that, Randy, as I recall, this group were concerned or

1 was concerned and still are concerned that while we
2 are promoting energy, we take special care at
3 protecting the resources at the same time. And I
4 think Geary Hund was the person who crafted that
5 letter, so it's laid out pretty clearly our thoughts
6 on that. I'm sorry, I don't have a copy of that
7 letter for you.

8 MS. RUSCHE: I can get it from the
9 Internet.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: From Steve
11 Razo.

12 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any other
13 questions from the public?

14 MR. WALDHEIM: Ed Waldheim. Glad to see
15 you on here.

16 I wanted to let you know that the Friends
17 of Jawbone and the Friends of El Mirage are fully
18 engaged and waiting for the new season to begin.

19 As we speak, at Jawbone we have two people
20 working doing signing with the BLM staff. We have
21 already done 28 miles of trail, so we are really in
22 place putting up the signs.

23 Eddie from the BLM office in Ridgecrest is
24 starting a new program, a safety awareness program,
25 that we are going to kick off October 31 with a

1 Halloween Party. It will be on the big monster
2 billboards, we will be putting it out. So I would
3 like to invite the DAC people so we can get the folks
4 out there.

5 El Mirage, we are trying to do the same
6 kind of thing where we are trying to see what we can
7 get going. The whole issue is we want to make sure we
8 have a safe season to recreate on the public lands,
9 both staying on the trails, but being responsible and
10 safe for themselves.

11 But I want you to know we are engaged. The
12 only problem we do have is that Schwarzenegger in
13 Sacramento, he stole all our money. They took
14 everything we have. It's gone. The only thing we
15 have left over is our grants program for this year and
16 next year God only knows what is going to happen.
17 That is a grave, grave concern. Without the funding
18 for managing our public lands, we are going to be in a
19 big, big hurt.

20 I hope Jan shares it with Mike Pool. What
21 are we going to do for next year? Don and Brad have
22 been incredibly helpful helping us. But I'm scared,
23 to tell you the truth. It takes us at Jawbone 400,000
24 to run the visitors' center and for that maintenance
25 of the Jawbone for that area that we kind of work hand

1 in hand with the BLM.

2 El Mirage has entry fees so we are in a
3 little bit better shape, but up in the areas we have
4 no fees, what are we going to do? Richard, what are
5 we going to do to maintain the trails? It's scaring
6 me. That's something that the DAC members should be
7 aware of that we should think about. Where are we
8 going to do the funding to manage our public lands?

9 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you,
10 Mr. Waldheim. Okay. So now we are going to -- state
11 your name and address.

12 MR. NEWMAN: Yes, I will do. I'm Robert
13 Carver Newman, II. I live in Redlands. I came here
14 for educational purposes only. I am a candidate for
15 governor of the State of California. I'm a viable
16 candidate, though not as well known as some of you
17 folks. I do live in the back side of Redlands, which
18 is actually Riverside County. I have never attended a
19 BLM meeting, but a member of my committee, who will
20 speak tomorrow on the issues about radiation in
21 methane sources -- anyway -- and other issues because
22 he is very involved with environmental issues for
23 many, many years. So I'm here for educational
24 purposes, so I appreciate your participation and
25 interest in these various issues. Thank you.

1 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you for
2 coming. Okay.

3 I think that closes it. And now we are
4 ready to move on to hearing from the BLM, California
5 Deputy State Director Janet Bedrosian. Pleased as
6 heck to have you here. So ready to go.

7 DEPUTY STATE DIRECTOR BEDROSIAN: Thank
8 you, Tom.

9 I bring you greetings from Acting Deputy
10 Director for Operations, Mike Pool, who is back in
11 Washington still, and Acting State Director Jim
12 Abbott. They both thank you very much for all your
13 service.

14 I think you all know that Mike Pool is a
15 big, big fan of advisory councils. And the one thing
16 we asked him to do when he got back to Washington was
17 to straighten out the semi-broken process which took
18 so long to get appointments. I think the success of
19 Mike's efforts is that we did get those appointment
20 letters the other day. We were absolutely thrilled,
21 and congratulations to all the new members.

22 I have to tell one quick story. Mike got
23 frustrated here about a month ago and pulled all the
24 people in the department that review your packages --
25 and believe me, there are a whole bunch of people that

1 go through all these different chairs for all these
2 different reasons, but they all have to sign off and
3 surname the packages. So Mike gathered them in the
4 room and had the Deputy Secretary David Hayes tell
5 them how important advisory councils were to Secretary
6 Salazar. And that he had brought sandwiches and
7 sodas. And they were all to remain until they
8 surnamed every single package.

9 And they did, so I hope that's the sign of
10 things to come. And Mike has reorganized things back
11 there where all the advisory councils are together. I
12 assure you, you are going to get more attention than
13 you have in the past and you certainly deserve it.

14 Jim Abbott, our acting state director, is
15 trying to hold things together while Mike is in
16 Washington. Mike is back there where he is acting
17 deputy director until a permanent deputy director is
18 appointed, so stay tuned on that issue.

19 Jim asked me, though, to cover a few things
20 that might be of interest to you. In your packets I
21 gave you the latest list I had of all the new people
22 back in Washington. Certainly not going to go through
23 that. That is the Obama team back in Washington
24 headed by Secretary Ken Salazar. There are a few
25 familiar faces you might remember: David Hayes, who

1 used to be in Interior when Clinton was president.
2 Under Secretary Babbitt is back as deputy. And Sylvia
3 Baca is back as a deputy assistant secretary, so all
4 that is in your packet. I don't need to go through
5 that.

6 Obviously, the big story for us is our new
7 director, Bob Abbey. I don't know if any of you who
8 were in Nevada have worked with Bob. He is a real
9 nice guy, and it's wonderful to have a career person
10 in place back running our office.

11 You have a little summary there of the
12 legislation that's most exiting. Not everything
13 that's in there, but I think since you met last we did
14 get our Omnibus Bill pretty much implemented here in
15 California. It included the wilderness areas here in
16 Riverside County, obviously included some new things
17 up in Inyo County for Buck McKean's bill and also
18 codified the National Landscape Conservation System,
19 which had all of our parks and monuments and
20 wildernesses in there -- monuments, wildernesses and
21 scenic rivers, and included some language which is
22 obviously of importance. And Steve will cover that
23 later.

24 But all the areas within the California
25 Desert Conservation Area that are managed for

1 conservation purposes are also part of the newly
2 codified National Landscape Conservation System. So
3 Steve will be describing a little bit later how we are
4 starting to implement that.

5 As far as the budget is concerned, we are
6 coming to the end of the 2009 budget. Things are
7 looking pretty positive for 2010. We did get a good
8 money number in the 2010 number. It passed the House
9 and the committee in the Senate, but is still pending
10 Senate floor action. There is a lot of differences
11 between the House and Senate bills, a lot of riders
12 and policy issues. Can I promise you we will have an
13 appropriation by the end of September? No, there is
14 still a chance they could do it when we they come back
15 from recess on the 8th of September, but it's possible
16 to have a continuing resolution.

17 On the state level, Steve is no longer our
18 only District Manager in California. He was so lonely
19 that we decided to even up things and go back to the
20 way we were historically, which has a Northern
21 California District Manager, Nancy Lull, and also a
22 Central California manager, Kathy Hardy. So we are a
23 three-tiered organization all over the state again to
24 match the California Desert.

25 As far as priorities in the state, we have

1 two huge ones. The American Reinvestment and Recovery
2 Act or Stimulus Bill, as we call it. We were
3 fortunate here in California. Out of the 305 million
4 dollars that the Bureau got nationwide under that
5 bill, we got about 36 million here in the state, about
6 100 different projects, and I think you will see some
7 good work being done here in the desert very soon. So
8 that's obviously a high priority to get those
9 contracts out.

10 And renewables, that's already come up and
11 it's certainly a huge priority. This administration
12 has made it a priority for us; certainly a priority
13 for Governor Schwarzenegger and his team. Huge impact
14 here in the desert. Huge impact on our office here,
15 and I know they are all working very hard, double and
16 triple time trying to keep up. And certainly we need
17 good advice from you all as to how to balance that
18 priority with what we all know and love about the
19 desert.

20 So thank you very much for your advice as
21 you work through on that.

22 I have a gift from Mr. Abbott and I will
23 give that to Steve to pass around. We do have some
24 key chains we thought might be of interest. And I
25 will be here all day, tonight, and tomorrow. If you

1 have questions -- and I don't want to take up any more
2 of your time unless you have questions of me.

3 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Do we have any
4 questions for Jan? This is a great opportunity.
5 Well, you will be here for the remainder of the day.

6 DEPUTY STATE DIRECTOR BEDROSIAN:
7 Absolutely, and tomorrow as well.

8 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That's wonderful.
9 Thank you for the wonderful report. Very insightful.
10 Okay. So now we are going to move on to the Desert
11 District Manager's report here for the Desert
12 Conservation Area, and that would be Steve Borchard.

13 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BORCHARD: We do have
14 another member that stepped up to the table, if you
15 would like to go ahead and introduce yourself to the
16 audience here and let people know who you represent.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: My name is
18 Jim Fitzpatrick, deputy director of the California
19 State Film Commission. And so I'm here to represent
20 not only the public-at-large, but the commercial film
21 industry in the state of California. So I'm a state
22 employee -- I think I am on. No? Using my voice is
23 loud enough any way.

24 Jim Fitzpatrick, deputy director of
25 California Film Commission and I oversee all the

1 filming in all state property in the state of
2 California, which is parks and beaches, highways,
3 freeways, prisons, et cetera. Thank you.

4 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Thanks for joining
5 us, Jim, and welcome.

6 Well, I think in our meeting about five
7 months ago in Barstow I pointed out it often happens
8 first here in the California Desert District, and
9 since then a lot has happened, first in the district.
10 Two days ago the Secretary signed confirmation letters
11 for our new DAC members. This may be a first, I
12 think, because as far as we know, there are no other
13 confirmations that have taken longer to accomplish,
14 and which only proves the importance of this Council.

15 The Senate can vet a nominee to the Supreme
16 Court in two months. But nominees to the Desert
17 District Advisory Council take five months, nine
18 months, so it's a long vetting process so I can say --
19 that was easy.

20 Let me point out the two new members who
21 have survived the confirmation process. To my left,
22 Tom Acuna who has been confirmed to the second term
23 and moved to a different category in the renewable
24 category, renewable energy category. And at the end
25 of the table is Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt, our San

1 Bernardino County Supervisor. Welcome to you both.

2 Let's go ahead and congratulate this
3 returning member and new members.

4 (Applause from the audience.)

5 I'm advised that another new member may be
6 joining us either later today or for tomorrow's
7 meeting. And that's April Sall. April is the
8 preserve manager for Pipe's Canyon and the Mission
9 Creek Preserves.

10 Another new member that couldn't make it on
11 24-hour's notice is Alex Schreiner, Director of
12 Geothermal Resources for CalEnergy. And Tom
13 Hollenbeck, the Caltrans director for Region 9 which
14 includes the northwest portion of the California's
15 Desert District.

16 What an outstanding group of individuals
17 and Council. It amazes me year after year how the
18 Council changes and evolves, because we attempt to
19 replace five members each year. At least five
20 members' terms expire every year. Every year I'm
21 amazed at the quality, knowledge and experience that
22 people are willing to volunteer their time and serve.
23 It makes my job easy. How else can I get free advice
24 from such a competent Council? At times I may
25 disagree with your advice, but let me assure you that

1 I listen and consider carefully all the advice that
2 you bring to me.

3 Now on to other events that have happened
4 since the last time we met. In late March the Omnibus
5 Land Management Act of 2009 was signed by the
6 president. For the Desert District that means the
7 designation of wilderness, wild and scenic rivers
8 throughout several counties here in the district. In
9 Inyo County, two and a half miles of the Amargoso
10 River and four miles of Cottonwood Creek were
11 designated as wild and scenic.

12 In Riverside County 2,000 acres of
13 wilderness was designated. And 2,100 acres were added
14 to the Santa Rosa Wilderness. And 5,000 acres have
15 been added to the Orocopia Mountains Wilderness,
16 23,000 acres also in Riverside County to the Palen
17 McCoy Wilderness, and 24,000 acres in the Pinto
18 Mountains Wilderness area. Also in the Chuckwalla
19 Mountains Wilderness, an additional 13,000 acres were
20 added.

21 The Omnibus Bill also authorizes the
22 establishment of the National Landscape Conservation
23 System. Jan mentioned the word "codified." This is
24 congressional codification of the National Landscape
25 Conservation System in order to conserve, protect and

1 restore nationally significant landscapes that have
2 outstanding cultural, ecological and scientific values
3 for the benefit of current generations.

4 So you might ask yourself, what is a
5 nationally significant landscape? Believe me, we are
6 asking ourselves what is a nationally significant
7 landscape. We haven't got a complete answer yet, but
8 we are working with our Washington office and others
9 to propose a definition of what lands within the
10 California Desert Conservation Area constitute
11 nationally significant landscapes.

12 You know, the easy stuff is the stuff
13 that's already in the system. The monuments. We have
14 two monuments here. And the wilderness and wilderness
15 study areas are already part of the system. The Wild
16 and Scenic Rivers and National Trails are already
17 components of the National Landscape Conservation
18 System.

19 The district has a significant part of
20 BLM's resources. We have 3.5 of the 3.8 million
21 acres, the wilderness that the BLM manages across the
22 nation. We have 30 of the 100 miles of wild and
23 scenic rivers in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System
24 across the nation managed by BLM. We have 300 of the
25 NLCS's 580 miles of Scenic and Historic Trails here in

1 the Desert District. And we have two of the popular
2 monuments here in the district -- well, in the
3 district. The Coso Monument technically is not in the
4 California Desert, but Santa Rosa/San Jacinto National
5 Monument is.

6 Some of the things we are looking at and
7 studying, adding to the NLCS system right now, we are
8 looking at our areas of critical environmental
9 concern. We are looking at the lands managed
10 primarily for critical habitat for either threatened
11 or endangered species, and we are looking at special
12 habitat management areas. And as we make progress
13 toward solidifying this and reaching agreement, we
14 will be sharing those decisions with you. And I would
15 love to hear any ideas about what you people think are
16 nationally significant landscapes that should be
17 included in the NLCS system.

18 Of course, renewable energy continues to be
19 one of the two top priorities of the Obama
20 administration. And of course, here in CDD you are
21 all aware of how important it is and the workload we
22 are looking at. Stimulus funds have contributed, as
23 well as our annual budgeting process have allowed us
24 to dedicate 15 of our positions to the processing of
25 renewable applications full-time. We have many more

1 employees that are working part-time, but we have made
2 the decision to redirect 15 positions full-time.

3 Some of the positions have already been
4 filled here in the Moreno Valley office. Within the
5 next 30 days five more new employees will report here
6 in the district. That will bring us up to 10
7 positions in the Moreno Valley office and we are
8 looking at filling five positions in the Palm Springs
9 field office. Specifically we are hiring project
10 managers, business associates, environmental
11 coordinators, archaeologists, biologists and
12 specialists. The district's Renewable Energy Program
13 Manager Greg Miller will be talking with you early
14 tomorrow morning and giving you more details on our
15 program accomplishments and directions.

16 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
17 of 2009 or ARRA, better known as the Stimulus Act,
18 allocated about 10 million dollars to the district, 4
19 million dollars which is planned for fuel reduction,
20 biomass utilization and habitat restoration in areas
21 of urban interface in our South Coast Region. Another
22 4 million dollars of our funds will be used for the
23 abandoned mine lands program. Our plans include to
24 install and operate an air monitoring system in and
25 around the community of Randsburg, install a fence

1 around the tailings of the Ruth Mine, reclaim the
2 tailings of the Darwin Mine, as well as a fence and do
3 some backfilling. And to plug approximately 2,000
4 abandoned land mine sites that present serious
5 physical safety hazards.

6 One million of the Recovery Act funds will
7 be used for deferred maintenance at the South Dunes
8 comfort station, the Amboy parking lot, and the South
9 Park Canyon Bridge repair project. An additional half
10 million dollars will be spent for habitat restoration
11 outside of the South Coast Region.

12 In late April the Federal Railroad
13 Administration held public meetings to receive
14 comments on the Draft Environmental Study for the
15 proposed Desert Express high speed passenger train
16 that would run between Victorville and Las Vegas. It
17 parallels I-15 on public lands. We are expecting a
18 plan of development for the Desert Express project
19 within weeks. Desert Express in turn would like to
20 get a Record of Decision and a Right-of-Way grant as
21 soon as possible.

22 However, issues remain on both the
23 alternatives discussed in the Draft EIS between Clark
24 Mountain and the Nevada border. One of the proposed
25 routes goes through the edge of the Mojave National

1 Preserve, for which the National Park Service has no
2 legal authority to issue a right-of-way. Another
3 alternative goes through two of our proposed solar
4 projects near Primm, so we are still working with
5 project proponents and their consultants to resolve
6 those conflicts. And finally, we are still awaiting
7 the introduction of Senator Feinstein's legislation
8 that could affect the California Desert District.

9 Now, I think September is the scheduled
10 introduction day. The Senator originally planned to
11 introduce this legislation before the summer recess,
12 but decided to take time and continue to work with
13 stakeholders to identify any concerns and problems
14 they might have and coordinate with those
15 stakeholders.

16 I wish to thank everyone for taking the
17 time to be here and again express my appreciation for
18 the Council members. Your participation in this
19 Council is extremely valuable. Thank you all for your
20 contributions to the public lands.

21 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That was a great
22 report, Steve. A lot of things going on here at the
23 BLM. A number of great topics here that Council might
24 want to talk a little bit about and maybe have some
25 questions for Steve. It looks like quite a few new

1 employees have been added to the BLM to assist with
2 these renewable applications. The abandoned mines
3 activity that's going on, a good topic. The Recovery
4 Act funds and how it's assisting with the BLM to carry
5 out mandates here in the desert is important.

6 The Victorville-Las Vegas plan of
7 development, that's probably a pretty big impact to
8 the desert. And I personally am, Steve, wondering
9 just a little bit about the various bills that you
10 mentioned that you are seeking stakeholder input.
11 Could you be a little more specific as to what that
12 might be?

13 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Well, Senator
14 Feinstein is working with her constituents. I know
15 the bill has lots of different things in it.
16 Primarily BLM's role has been to assist the Senator
17 with map-making activities. I think it's been in the
18 press that there is a Monument proposal in the bill
19 and also in the press that I think she is looking at
20 some Wilderness designation. That's all I'm at
21 liberty to discuss here. As we assist, our primary
22 role is assisting and providing information and
23 analysis and map-making for the Senator.

24 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Jim.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: So the bill

1 has not been introduced?

2 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: No, it hasn't been
3 introduced. September is the target introduction
4 date.

5 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Do any of the other
6 members have any discussion points?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: Steve, two
8 things: Could you repeat the figure you gave for the
9 percentage -- the ratio of trails on BLM management
10 California land versus nationally?

11 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Nationally -- the
12 trails I was speaking to was Historic and Scenic
13 Trails. And that was 300 miles here in CDD, and
14 nationally that figure is 580 miles.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: The Desert
16 Express issues remain with regard to a section from
17 Clark Mountain -- I shouldn't say section, but Clark
18 Mountain to the Nevada border. Can you give any broad
19 categorization of what those issues might be?

20 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: Once the
21 train makes it over mountain pass and heads towards
22 Primm, there are two or three alternative routes they
23 are looking at. I believe their published document
24 only has two. One of them swings out and goes into
25 the Mojave Preserve Park unit for a couple of miles.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: The two sub
2 issues after that that you mentioned, the solar
3 facility and the Mojave Preserve, those are the
4 issues?

5 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Yes, those are the
6 issues.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: I missed
8 that. Thank you.

9 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: And I know the
10 proponent has already proposed a new route that would
11 skirt around the two solar units and avoid the
12 Preserve, so they have a potential fix in the works.
13 But it came out after their draft document became
14 public.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: Would you
16 expect that to cause further delay or any particular
17 significant delay?

18 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: I guess it would
19 depend on the significance of the impact of that route
20 and the fact that if there are any impacts, then it
21 would not have been presented to the public, and the
22 draft allowed them to comment. I know the new route
23 might be controversial from the Bighorn Sheep
24 perspective because it goes actually above the I-6
25 BrightSource upfan from that, swings around it even

1 closer to where the sheep are.

2 So it's not a slam dunk that solves all the
3 issues and may actually create a new issue and new
4 impact that they may want to consider putting further
5 analysis out for the public to comment on. But that
6 would be the Railroad Administration's decision as to
7 how they go about vetting that new route and those
8 issues associated with it.

9 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Steve, one last --

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: The new route that
11 they said is proposed, would that be more towards the
12 foothills?

13 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: Yes, it's
14 upfan from the base of the foothill and goes up around
15 on the uphill side, upfan side of the BrightSource
16 project.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Not to dismiss the
18 importance of the wildlife and Bighorn Sheep, but I
19 have explored that area. There are some beautiful
20 mountains and foothills around that area there with
21 somewhat -- I understand some fairly rare vegetation.
22 I hope they do an environmental study.

23 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: They will have to
24 provide detailed information on that new route segment
25 and provide analysis and put that out there for the

1 public, I think, before moving forward.

2 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Steve, I have a
3 real quick question on the Mojave National Preserve.
4 You mentioned that they don't have the ability to
5 grant a right-of-way, and that would be a BLM
6 decision? Did I get that wrong?

7 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Their regulations
8 don't allow them to grant a right-of-way, so it would
9 take congressional action to put that train there.

10 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: The mine
12 remediation funds from the ARRA, those are
13 supplemented, are they not, with a grant from the
14 California OHV division to help remediate mine
15 hazards?

16 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Yes, that's correct.
17 One of the specific ones I know is for bat
18 inventories. California OHV Commission division
19 approved a grant for bat inventories to support the
20 AML program. If everybody knows this, we have to
21 protect all the wildlife in the desert, including
22 bats. And bats at times utilize abandoned mine
23 features. And if they are present and using those
24 features, the closure methods we use are bat gates.
25 So we keep the public out and reduce the safety hazard

1 but allow the continued habitat use that those mining
2 features present for bats.

3 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Lloyd.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Besides bats, I
5 have noticed that owls sometimes use the vertical
6 shafts, and I don't know if they are taken into
7 consideration or what.

8 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: Yes, they
9 are. There is a very fancy "hoopala" over a vertical
10 shaft right adjacent to Highway 395 in Johannesburg --
11 Red Mountain, and it has openings in it that
12 accommodate -- and perches that will accommodate both
13 owls and bats, the food chain.

14 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Okay. Advisory
15 Council, are there any other questions that we have
16 for Steve? Okay.

17 Just wanted to take a moment and thank you,
18 Janet, for the gifts. These are quite nice, and I'm
19 sorry, I failed to do that. Thank you.

20 Steve, is the protocol that you go through
21 the district reports with your staff or do we run that
22 here on the site?

23 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: No, I think
24 the protocol we agreed to was we would put those out
25 for you. And what I had agreed to was two weeks

1 before the meeting in the hopes that you would have
2 the chance to review them. And then we would offer
3 this period up, rather than have the field managers or
4 their representatives read through those reports, they
5 would make themselves available to respond to your
6 questions or inquiries for additional explanation of
7 information either included in the report or something
8 you would like to ask them that they did not include
9 in the report.

10 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Rather than maybe
11 ask questions, I am going to propose this as an idea,
12 and I hope I don't tread on anybody from the district,
13 but would it be all right if we had you come up to the
14 mic and have you give a brief summary, not read the
15 report, but if you could give us a brief summary of
16 what is going on in your district, that might trigger
17 some feedback from us that we might have forgotten.
18 How does that sound to the Advisory Council here? Is
19 that all right?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: Highlights.

21 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Highlights? Okay.
22 Vicki, can we hear from your El Centro
23 office, please?

24 MS. WOOD: Good afternoon. Vicki Wood,
25 BLM El Centro field manager. I'm short. I can't help

1 it. Just a few highlights. Let's see.

2 Solar, solar, solar. Can I sit down now?
3 A lot of the renewable energy going on, of course,
4 Stirling Solar Two is moving along every single day.
5 We have several wind energy projects. We have
6 transmission lines. Sunrise is getting ready to put
7 in a Notice to Proceed on some construction at the
8 Mountain Grade Spring area.

9 Then Mesquite Regional Landfill, actually,
10 I don't have the best update from them. I know they
11 have put in an application with the county to do more
12 trucking than they thought they were going to do, but
13 they want to come to the subgroup meeting for ISDRA
14 and give their report there.

15 And then Imperial Sand Dunes, our RAMP is
16 coming along. We think it's going to be late-late
17 summer before we have a draft, but hopefully will be
18 soon. Trash service: The contract for trash service
19 is out on the street right now. We hope to have the
20 bids in by September 8, and we will be making a
21 decision as soon as we can on the trash contractor.

22 We also got 176,000 with OHV money to help
23 with trash this year, so it shouldn't be an issue for
24 us.

25 Wash Road: I think that's on the agenda

1 for later, but that's moving along. And every single
2 solitary problem that could happen in getting a road
3 has happened. But we are still hoping that by
4 Halloween we will have everything up and ready to go.
5 We are working on it really hard.

6 Law enforcement: Everything is going about
7 the same there with law enforcement. We still don't
8 have 15 on board, but I think we do have 14 and we did
9 some interviews this morning before I came up here to
10 try to get another position hired.

11 Westside: We are still seeing a lot of
12 trafficking, people and drugs. Eastside is going
13 better. We have a few new -- administratively we have
14 a few new personnel in our office as well. We have --
15 we are going to have our seasonal park rangers coming
16 on board soon. We have hired two permanent park
17 rangers. And we have our outdoor rec programmer
18 coming on board Monday. I think that's it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I have a couple
20 questions. At our meeting, one of our previous
21 meetings we had a gentleman explain some of the
22 geothermal leasing areas. And one of those areas
23 looked like it was going to come down into the
24 Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. And I asked
25 about that and he was going to get back to me and he

1 never did. I wondered if you could tell us if that's
2 the case.

3 MS. WOOD: It's not going to go into the
4 ISDRA at all. And anything as far as future
5 geothermal issues will be addressed in the RAMP.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: You talked
7 about the -- we will talk about the other thing. I
8 want to thank the El Centro field office for the work
9 they have done on the road. They really stepped up to
10 the plate there and generated the environmental
11 assessment to get that in there. And they've been
12 working really hard because they could have just said
13 we don't have enough time to do that or it's too hard
14 to do. I'm really supportive of what they have done
15 there. But as far as that goes, there are going to be
16 some issues that come along with that as far as
17 maintaining it and putting -- a couple questions I had
18 was if you had intended to limit that to the three-
19 wheel vehicles.

20 MS. WOOD: That's our intention at this
21 time.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: One of the
23 other issues, we had -- Steve was very good about
24 putting together a list of motions that we have put
25 together over the time. And last meeting we had a

1 motion to try to improve the signing and in the NECO
2 area on the east side of the dunes there. And I
3 didn't see that in any of the comments here, so I
4 wondered how are we progressing on that? I know there
5 was some money from the Off-Road Vehicle Commission
6 for signing, not specifically for your area, but for
7 the California Desert District in the NECO area. So I
8 wondered if we had been working for that.

9 MS. WOOD: Sixty percent of the routes
10 are signed by them, NECO, on the map. We hope to
11 complete the signing in the fall. We have another
12 grant that will help, and we will have a small crew
13 come out and finish that signing. There have also
14 been 14-day camping limit signs posted and limited use
15 area signs along the major roads. And those limited
16 area -- limited use area signs contain a decal that
17 says that the wash is open.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: As far as -- we
19 have the -- I know, I don't think you are involved in
20 trying to -- the road down there, between the county
21 and the other people; is that correct. You don't
22 really have too much involvement with that?

23 MS. WOOD: They came to our office and
24 talked about it. CHP is going to have the final say
25 on that.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Once CHP makes
2 their determination, if they do, then your office will
3 have to be informed that they don't write citations on
4 that road anymore for that. Thank you.

5 That's about -- when you say the RAMP in
6 the late summer, can you tell me where that is? I
7 know last time it was in Steve's hands. Has it gone
8 any further?

9 MS. WOOD: Yes, it has gone further. We
10 do have a Preferred Alternative that we are still
11 tweaking a little bit, adding some flesh to the bones
12 there. And any day now, just seriously any day, the
13 Administrative Draft is going to go through our
14 office.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: It will come
16 back or does it have to go to Washington to be
17 approved?

18 MS. WOOD: The Administrative Draft
19 hasn't been completed yet. That will take about two
20 weeks for the internal review, and then we get to
21 brief Washington.

22 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: We have to
23 go to the state office first.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: District office
25 and state office, and then does it have to be approved

1 in Washington also?

2 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: We have to
3 give levels of our organization work to do. Yes, it
4 does have to have a sign-off by the Washington office
5 before it becomes public.

6 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: You have a
7 question, Randy? Oh, Jim, please.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: With the
9 shortage of personnel -- and this is a question I have
10 for some of the other districts as well -- have you
11 had difficulty filling film requests? I know this is
12 very specific, but when you are short-staffed,
13 sometimes people are told that they can't obtain a
14 permit. I'm not specifically referencing your area,
15 but that stuff gets back to me. And in your area,
16 just so you know, I have been able to secure Caltrans
17 with giving us a freeway, a look-alike on the 111
18 there on Calpernia. So we are going to have a little
19 more activity there. Then when people come and shoot
20 a vacant freeway, as it is, they are going to look for
21 some other alternatives. So I need to be prepared.
22 If there is nothing you can do about it, but I would
23 like to know.

24 MS. WOOD: If you get your applications
25 in in plenty of time, I don't think you have an issue.

1 But we do like to have lead time. And we do have
2 probably a half staff dedicated to films. If it's a
3 problem, just let me know.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: All right.
5 Thank you.

6 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Randy.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Last we heard
8 about a year ago, there was possibility that trash
9 service would no longer be provided at the Imperial
10 Sand Dunes Recreation Area. Is it fair to say that a
11 grant providing some funding for it goes a long way in
12 changing people's minds?

13 MS. WOOD: Well, it goes about halfway.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Thank you. So
15 trash will be back.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: One more
17 question. At the last meeting we were looking at a
18 fee increase there, and we didn't go through with that
19 for a number of reasons. What is going to be the
20 status of your budget preparation? Obviously, we
21 thought we needed a fee increase in order to have a
22 balanced budget. If we don't have a fee increase, we
23 are probably not going to have a balanced budget. How
24 are you going to handle that?

25 MS. WOOD: Right now we are working on

1 the 2010 budget, and it is smaller than we would like
2 it to be. As far as some of your concerns about
3 whether we are going to reduce staff or anything like
4 that, we are hoping that this reduction in staff will
5 equal the reduction in visitation. And we don't know
6 for sure. And we haven't had a time to sit down and
7 really go over -- I haven't seen the 2010 budget yet,
8 and hopefully the subgroup can help us with that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: As long as we
10 are involved with the subgroup from this organization,
11 I think we should be able to work out good solutions
12 to that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Two
14 questions -- I'm sorry. What is the next step with
15 regard to the geothermal leases in the Truckhaven
16 area?

17 MS. WOOD: You would have to get that
18 from Dick. I don't have a full and complete answer
19 for you. If you are talking about the West
20 Chocolates?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: No, the ones
22 that are checkerboarded. Truckhaven -- I don't think
23 it's Truckhaven, I guess.

24 MS. WOOD: The leases are out and a
25 Record of Decision is out for Truckhaven. And the

1 three successful bidders on those competitive leases,
2 I think we are just waiting for them to tell us what
3 they are going to be doing.

4 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: The next
5 step is for the successful bidders to submit a
6 development plan. We did go through a process where
7 one of the noncompetitive leaseholders challenged our
8 requirement to unitize development, and that challenge
9 has been dismissed by the Interior Board and our
10 decision has been upheld.

11 MS. WOOD: The project manager for that
12 is John Dalton.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: My last
14 question is, the Tooley (as pronounced) Wind Project.
15 Is the plan of development a public document? Can I
16 get a plan of that. Is that bad? It sounds bad.

17 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: I wanted to append
18 my response to your last question.

19 Another next step is the state is going to
20 issue a Draft EIR for their lands within that
21 geothermal leasing area. Our analysis and decision
22 only covered the federal lands and you are familiar
23 with state lands in there. State Lands Commission is
24 going to issue an EIR analyzing -- tiering off the
25 Federal EIS and they will be making a decision, I

1 would assume, to go ahead and put their lands up for
2 lease, the state lands up for lease, as well as some
3 of the park lands within that same block, that 14,000-
4 acre block.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Does that
6 mean that geothermal companies are at a standstill
7 until that portion is done?

8 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: One would think so
9 because a unitization is required. But I can't say
10 yes. That's logical.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: It's
12 extremely confusing because it's all messed up like
13 the rest of Truckhaven. Plan of development for
14 Tooley Wind Project.

15 MS. WOOD: I believe plans are going to
16 be put on the Internet when they are completed.
17 Right?

18 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: We may want
19 to ask Mr. Miller that question tomorrow. I can't
20 remember a specific decision to post a plan of
21 development on Internet.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Can I get a
23 copy?

24 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Stop by the office
25 and ask for a copy.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Okay.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: I wanted to make a
3 comment about picking up trash as opposed to
4 pack-it-in, pack-it-out, your own trash. I would hope
5 people would take the responsibility of picking up
6 their own trash, but I know there are always a few
7 that don't. And maybe BLM has to have some
8 facilities, trash facility for those people. But I
9 think it would also encourage -- if you encourage
10 people to take care of their own trash, it would also
11 be more cost-effective for the BLM, and I think as a
12 general rule it's a good thing anyway.

13 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: It is.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: One of the
15 components that we have asked BLM to put into this
16 trash contract is they are looking at it on a per
17 tonnage basis so that we can hopefully advertise to
18 our visitors if they do continue to pack it in and
19 out, it will reduce the amount of cost because a lot
20 of people think, oh, we are paying for that and we
21 might as well use them. But if we can get the word
22 out that the payment is going to be based on the
23 tonnage thing, if we cut down the amount of use, we
24 are going to save the visitors' fees. We need to get
25 the word out once the contract is signed, and we will

1 find out the details of it.

2 That's one of the things we are trying to
3 do is get people to haul their stuff out.

4 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any more
5 questions from the Council?

6 I have one real quick question for you,
7 Vicki, and I'm going to ask all of the offices to kind
8 of give me an answer on it too.

9 I know every organization has a significant
10 amount of work, and there are only so many resources
11 to go around. And I was wondering what is the status?
12 Do you feel your group is adequately staffed currently
13 for the workload, or do you feel like you are
14 10 percent understaffed? Just kind of a gut feeling.
15 Just a general --

16 MS. WOOD: We have always got more work
17 than we could do, and I don't know at what point you
18 say this is the level of staff. And we have to deal
19 with it. We do have limited amount of staff for each
20 office, and I think, speaking for El Centro, we are
21 doing the best we can do. We are trying to hire
22 people all the time. You can ask Steve about getting
23 people to come to the desert right now. It's kind of
24 hard to get folks to come.

25 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I didn't mean to

1 put you on the spot. I think it's important for the
2 Council to understand some of the things that you had
3 faced, and that's helpful.

4 MS. WOOD: We can always do things
5 faster with more people, but I think we stay
6 reasonably caught up, at least for my office it feels
7 that way.

8 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you for your
9 excellent report.

10 Who wants to be next? Would it be Palm
11 Springs?

12 MR. KALISH: My name is John Kalish,
13 field manager of the Palm Springs South Coast field
14 office. Maybe since Vicki was talking about the
15 staffing issue, I will continue on in that discussion.

16 I think it's a fair statement to say,
17 especially in this very high workload environment,
18 that our staffs are inadequate really to handle the
19 responsibilities and the work load that we have. We
20 are going through a couple of different actions
21 essentially to try and mitigate that. One is, of
22 course, advertising and bringing on new staff.

23 But several years ago we started to develop
24 on-call contracts with consulting firms where we have
25 been able to secure some very talented staff

1 specialists, archaeologists and biologists and
2 individuals that are very skilled in handling NEPA
3 analyses and all the various aspects of our program.
4 Those contracts, being that they are essentially an
5 on-call contract, when we have a need for the work,
6 then they are essentially a task order away. We write
7 the description of the work we need to have done. And
8 these individuals report to our office, and they
9 become BLM employees for the time it takes them to
10 complete whatever we need them do.

11 So that has worked out actually quite well
12 for a number of our projects and has really expanded
13 our capability to handle heavy workload where -- and
14 especially with time constraints where we wouldn't
15 have time to go out and advertise for additional
16 staff.

17 The one third way we have used is
18 cooperating with other agencies and entities through
19 collaboration. I think a good example is on
20 projects -- we had a transmission line where we became
21 co-leads with the Western Area Power Administration on
22 the federal side of the project whereby Western was
23 able to provide their archaeologists to do all of the
24 section 106 work and really free our archaeologist to
25 do other projects. And so we handled various parts of

1 that environmental analysis and they handled other
2 sections. And so in the end it was a very solid
3 environmental analysis, and that worked out quite
4 well.

5 So even though we would like a lot more
6 staff, we are actually filling quite a few new
7 positions, a lot of which is being driven by the solar
8 energy initiative. And in doing so, that's going to
9 help out a lot and then using some of these other
10 creative ways to kind of expand our overall workforce
11 either temporarily by using contracts or otherwise.

12 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you, John,
13 that's a good assessment. I appreciate that. I'm
14 glad to hear that you folks are utilizing the contract
15 idea to bring in extra help when we need it.

16 MR. KALISH: That has worked out very
17 well in the last couple of years. I can go over a
18 couple of the real highlights.

19 I think most of you know that we have been
20 involved in wind energy for many years out of our
21 office. Actually, since the late seventies and early
22 eighties. We do have the 20 existing wind energy
23 leases. However, we did issue our 21st lease that was
24 recently approved involving a wind energy operation.
25 The project proponent is AESC West. Our lands within

1 San Gorgonio Pass are pretty well, we consider, built
2 out except for the one area that AESC West made
3 application for. And that project is approved,
4 located right on the north end of the city limits of
5 Palm Springs.

6 But one of the limitations of renewable
7 energy, of course, is transmission. And we have been
8 working on various transmission projects probably for
9 almost ten years. I have talked about a few of those
10 in past meetings. I will just real quickly run down
11 these projects. They seem to take quite a few years
12 to actually materialize.

13 The Desert Southwest 500 kV transmission
14 line from Blythe to the Devers Substation has been
15 authorized. And it's an Energy/Imperial Irrigation
16 District project, and they are presently submitting a
17 construction plan. So we anticipate that that project
18 may get up and running fairly soon.

19 Edison's DPV #2 500 kV line, we did issue a
20 Final EIS/EIR in November of 2006. And it's a
21 two-state project running from Palo Verde Valley,
22 Arizona, to the Devers substation in the Palm Springs
23 area. But due to issues over in Arizona, the project
24 has been delayed, mainly issues brought forward by the
25 Arizona Corporation Commission. Edison recently

1 decided to delete the Arizona portion of that project.
2 So right now we have a California-only kV line. We
3 are waiting for the Public Utilities Commission to
4 approve the modification of the project and upon that
5 approval, we will prepare the Record of Decision for
6 that 500 kV line.

7 Blythe Energy, 230 kV line from Blythe to
8 the Julian Hines pumping station on I-10. That's been
9 authorized and if you drive on I-10 east toward
10 Blythe, you can see the project. It's under
11 construction. Those are the new poles that are going
12 in.

13 And then lastly, one project that has at
14 least initially had a lot of controversy associated
15 with it, Green Path North. It's a Los Angeles
16 Department of Water and Power 500 kV line which starts
17 in the Palm Springs area, the Devers substation and
18 heads north up through Morongo -- or Big Morongo
19 Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern through
20 Yucca Valley and curves on around to Lucerne and to
21 the top of Cajon Pass and goes down to the area at the
22 base of Cajon Pass. We have very recently completed
23 some agreements between the Forest Service and us, the
24 two federal leads to the project, as well as LADWP to
25 initiate the processing of their application for this

1 project. LADWP is the CEQA lead, so they will be
2 preparing the EIR. We do plan to have a very vigorous
3 public scoping process that should begin fairly soon.
4 Our goal is to have a very detailed analysis of all
5 the proposed routes and all of the alternative routes
6 that are reasonable for that project.

7 On solar, we have about 140 acres under
8 application in the eastern Riverside County and we are
9 in the same process that everyone else is, reviewing
10 plans of development. And within our office we have a
11 team that's designing a process to analyze proposals
12 along with our various partners, and I think you will
13 hear more about that tomorrow.

14 The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National
15 Monument, we have completed the management plan a few
16 years ago and incorporated the Coachella Valley MSHCP
17 into management of the monument. The only part of the
18 planning process still outstanding is the trails plan
19 that's pending receipt of a biological opinion from
20 the Fish and Wildlife Service.

21 And just a couple of other items on the
22 forefront: You may have heard on the news today we
23 have the Cottonwood fire, which is the Val Vista area
24 over near Hemet. Last I heard, it's about 1,000
25 acres. It involves a little bit of BLM lands mostly

1 on the forest. It does have some real potential if it
2 starts running uphill to threaten the mountain
3 communities above that area. We do have one engine
4 and other resources on that fire.

5 For fuel, last year we did about 2,000
6 acres of fuels treatments in western Riverside and San
7 Diego counties. And this year we are focusing in on
8 the international fieldbreak down on the border as
9 well as Houser Mountain. Some general road brushing
10 efforts throughout our areas, and then doing fuels
11 work and invasive species work in Lake Matthews in
12 Riverside County, as well as Pocket Flats and
13 Whitewater and Big Morongo.

14 Border issues are ongoing. We work very
15 closely with Border Patrol on those various issues.
16 And one last thing that I would like to bring up is
17 within Riverside County we have never had an open OHV
18 area that we could focus riders or send riders to that
19 wanted more of an unconstrained riding opportunity.
20 We have plenty of designated roads and trails, but we
21 have been working with the Riverside OHV Commission
22 and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments
23 and the County supervisors' office to look at several
24 options within Riverside County to ultimately
25 designate an open OHV area, which we think would be

1 very beneficial. That's it.

2 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That's a great
3 overview. You have a lot of things going in your
4 district. Richard.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I have a
6 question for you. I had a question about the
7 transmission line. I see that you have -- IID and
8 Edison both have a line from Blythe. Is that going to
9 run on the same right-of-way?

10 MR. KALISH: They are separate
11 rights-of-ways for each individual project, but they
12 do parallel each other and they are within a
13 designated utility corridor that was designated back
14 in 1980 with the California Desert Conservation Area
15 Plan.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Is there -- now
17 that Edison is going to end that line in Blythe, is
18 there a substation in Blythe? Is there a 500 kV
19 station out there, or are they going to build a
20 substation out there?

21 MR. KALISH: There is a substation that
22 will ultimately be utilized for the number of projects
23 from Blythe Energy to Desert Southwest and also tied
24 in with a number of the solar projects that are being
25 proposed out in that area within eastern Riverside

1 County.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: They are going
3 to expand an existing substation, not build a new one?

4 MR. KALISH: No, originally called the
5 Midpoint Substation -- you will see that in
6 documents -- and they are talking about changing it to
7 the Colorado River Substation. Very close to the gas
8 power plant or essentially south and west of the power
9 plant. Very close to the existing Devers Palo Verde
10 No. 1 line that's already there.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: One other
12 question about one of your water projects. And this
13 is an observation. I see that you are working to
14 generate a riparian area associated with the lining of
15 the Coachella Canal. Was that area there before they
16 built the canal or is that the result of seepage?

17 MR. KALISH: Well, both. The Dos Palmas
18 area, if you go back in the old historic records long
19 before the canal was built, it was a stage stop and it
20 was -- it's been called Dos Palmas for many years
21 because of the palm trees that were in that area.

22 When the on-line canal was constructed in
23 that area, up gradient, it greatly augmented the
24 amount of water that flowed into that system. In
25 fact, one of the challenges that we have in managing

1 the Dos Palmas area is to, first of all, determine
2 from a long-range standpoint what effects the lining
3 of the canal are going to have on the habitat. And
4 then how we can work with the water district to
5 mitigate that.

6 So under contract there is an ongoing, a
7 very detailed hydrologic study starting to answer lots
8 of those questions. But we are finding that there are
9 different aquifers and different levels of aquifers
10 and some were affected by the canal very directly and
11 very quickly, actually, and others are not. So we can
12 certainly at another meeting go into much more detail
13 if you are interested in the hydrology of that area.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: Going back to
15 Devers's Palo Verde No. 2 line. I'm just curious, why
16 did Arizona reject the project and California isn't
17 rejecting the project? I'm just curious as to what
18 elements caused such problem in Arizona that we here
19 in California seem to be blind to.

20 MR. KALISH: Well, the project, the
21 purpose indeed was economic. It was to get cheaper
22 electricity generated in Arizona into the Edison
23 service area. At the public meetings that we held
24 over there in Arizona, one general theme was that
25 there was some real concern that Arizona would have to

1 look at the power plants, breathe the air, and have
2 all of this infrastructure while all of the cheap
3 power would be going to California. And that would
4 keep their rates higher. So that was one issue and
5 concern.

6 And I think the other is that Arizona
7 wanted to be able to utilize that project for some of
8 their own purposes, tie some other lines in and do
9 some other infrastructure improvements. And that
10 that's been a long, ongoing negotiation. As to
11 whether the Arizona section of that project will ever
12 get built or what shape it's in, it's hard to say.
13 But that's probably in a nutshell our impression of
14 what that process is.

15 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any other
16 questions from the Council here?

17 One quick question for you, John. I heard
18 something really exciting and that was the idea that
19 Riverside County was looking at developing an OHV area
20 specifically.

21 Two questions: When do they feel that
22 would reach a conclusion where they actually selected
23 the site? Do you have any rough date on that? That's
24 the first question.

25 MR. KALISH: Well, the search for an

1 open OHV area has been going on for a long time. And
2 it's difficult to find an area within the county where
3 there are not constraints, there are not some real
4 issues. There are several areas that have been
5 identified. One is Drop 31 on the Coachella Canal,
6 which is -- right now it's really utilized as a de
7 facto open area. Quite a bit of it is private land
8 and that's one possibility.

9 There are some real issues, and to give you
10 an example, that area butts up against a designated
11 wilderness area. And it's very close to our Dos
12 Palmas Area of Critical Environmental Concern and some
13 other similar type issues. And all of those issues
14 could be managed in a way to continue to really look
15 at that area as a feasible open area. But that's
16 really what has been taking the time is just the
17 habitat issues and the constraints and the land status
18 and land ownership patterns in the Coachella Valley.

19 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Through your
20 discussion you answered the other questions that I
21 have. So that's perfect. Thank you.

22 Any other thoughts, folks?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: Actually, I
24 just wanted to mention, since you mentioned the
25 Riverside looking at an OHV open area. San Bernardino

1 County is exploring this, as well, in the Morongo
2 Basin. In fact, in cooperation with the City of
3 Twentynine Palms, we are studying three areas for
4 potential regional park which would probably be done
5 in cooperation with the Marine Corps Base, and then
6 also an OHV area.

7 Also, while you are there, you mentioned
8 the Green Path North Project. I wanted to just
9 mention that -- well, I need to mention that our Board
10 of Supervisors is opposed to the proposal through
11 Morongo Valley and eventually Lucerne Valley because
12 of impacts on undeveloped desert.

13 But in addition to that, I wanted to point
14 out that until recently, I was a member of the
15 California Seismic Safety Commission, and I know you
16 are familiar with San Andreas Fault in particular.
17 There is -- I just want to get it out there that there
18 are existing power lines.

19 You mentioned the Lytle Creek area. Along
20 the BNSF railroad tracks and above the tracks there at
21 I-15 and 215, along Cajon Boulevard, Route 66, there
22 is a terrible slide area where there are existing
23 power lines, huge power lines that a major earthquake
24 will absolutely almost positively trigger a slide that
25 will take out the railroad tracks and those power

1 lines.

2 So I hope that if they do go with that
3 alignment, they do consult with the Seismic Safety
4 Commission because they are concerned about that area,
5 and it would just add insult to injury to put more
6 power lines along that part of the fault.

7 So this is being processed through your
8 office, then?

9 MR. KALISH: That's correct. The EIS,
10 the federal part of that project, is being done
11 jointly by the San Bernardino National Forest and our
12 office there in Palm Springs.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MITZELFELT: I'll make
14 sure I am on the list for the EIR/EIS too.

15 MR. KALISH: Certainly.

16 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think that's it.
17 Thank you very much, John. Okay.

18 So we have three more offices coming
19 through, and we have got 25 minutes? So do you want
20 to go -- and well, three o'clock. Not quite 3 o'clock
21 yet. Do you want to go to 3:00 or you want to break
22 yet. Let's try to get at least one more office in
23 here and let's hear from Ridgecrest.

24 MR. GUM: I changed since the last time
25 you saw me.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: You didn't
2 send my jacket.

3 MR. GUM: He talked to me and he never
4 got it in my hands. But I think he is going to bring
5 it with him.

6 I'm Linn Gum, and I'm the assistant field
7 manager out of Ridgecrest and I do believe he is going
8 to bring your jacket.

9 In answer to one of your questions,
10 Mr. Acuna, in regards to funding and how are we doing
11 in our field offices for having sufficient personnel,
12 I guess the thing that I would draw some attention to
13 is if we look at our sister agencies, they are funded
14 six times to -- six times the amount that we get as
15 far as how much money can we put on the ground per
16 acre.

17 So if you can look at us and say, we have
18 this huge crush of work that comes through the door,
19 how many more people could we use? If we could just
20 get funded like our sister agencies, you could see six
21 of me. And everybody else would give us a great way
22 to handle applications that come through the door.
23 Just as a thought.

24 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think it's great.
25 I'm surprised, because actually I'm kind of impressed

1 with the BLM's turnaround time compared to some of the
2 other experiences that I have had with other
3 government agencies.

4 MR. GUM: Thank you, very kind of you to
5 say. We struggle. And when we see our fellows that
6 are funded at 12 or 15 bucks an acre to manage the
7 public lands and we are funded at 2 or 3 dollars an
8 acre, it hurts a little. So that would be my answer
9 there.

10 As far as filming goes, you said you wanted
11 to know about what goes on filming wise. We have a
12 very active film program and we have an agreement we
13 operate under there. We have probably 20 or so sites
14 that are favorite film sites that we have gone through
15 programmatic agreements on. It's Tuesday afternoon,
16 yeah, we can go do that if in fact we are going to one
17 of those areas. But if you step outside of one of
18 those areas, programmatic agreement, get us our
19 application. We will take a look at it and we will
20 get the work done. So mostly out of Ridgecrest we get
21 three-day turnaround on our applications.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: To that
23 issue I just want to comment, historically the BLM at
24 Ridgecrest, even in the days when I was at odds with
25 the BLM in other areas, BLM has always, for the most

1 part, been exceedingly cooperative in helping maintain
2 the film industry in California. Thank you.

3 THE WITNESS: We try. We cross-train
4 folks in our field office. My IT person, as an
5 example, has been trained how to deal with
6 applications. We have one of our maintenance people
7 trained and our realty specialist and we try to serve
8 that community.

9 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: I should mention
10 your predecessor, Shari Davis, and Brad Mitzelfelt we
11 can thank for that programmatic document that allows
12 that quick turnaround because San Bernardino County
13 funded the development of that document.

14 MR. GUN: Certainly, we couldn't do it
15 without them.

16 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: At the behest and
17 work of our Shari Davis.

18 MR. GUN: Thank you for that. As far as
19 things that you take a look on the report, a few
20 updates, major things that have gone on since that
21 point in time.

22 We have issued, effective the 23rd of July,
23 the FONSI and Decision Record and the right-of-way
24 grant for the COSO Hay Ranch Water Injection and
25 Delivery System Project that's to deliver 3,000 acre

1 feet a year of water to the COSO geothermal field for
2 makeup waters. Since 1980 that field has declined
3 about 70 megawatts in capacity. We originally brought
4 it on at about 270 meg and it's down to about 200
5 right now. With the supplementation of that
6 geothermal reservoir, we believe we can build it back
7 to 260 megs. That's enough to fuel about 50,000
8 homes. So it's a fairly significant project that's
9 ongoing.

10 You may have heard the issue at that time
11 was water, and it will continue to be so. It's kind
12 of a segueway into the next phase of things that are
13 happening out in that same Rose Valley area. We're
14 about to go kick off here very soon in mid-September a
15 public information meeting and scoping for leasing of
16 about 22,000 acres immediately adjacent to the COSO
17 geothermal field on BLM grounds off of the Navel Air
18 Warfare Station. That is the same acres that was
19 studied under the original 1979-1980 EIS that
20 ultimately led to the leasing of the lands where COSO
21 is currently located.

22 But we are going through a restudy of that
23 area. One of the applicants you see, Deep Rose
24 Project, has some leases that are -- some lands that
25 were applied for lease on back in about the year 2000,

1 and that has spurred a look-see at the surrounding
2 acres again to see whether or not it will be suitable
3 for geothermal development.

4 We have a number of competing interests in
5 the area. Cultural resources is a major one, Native
6 American considerations there, a major one. We have
7 both Mohave ground squirrel habitat and Desert
8 Tortoise habitat in that area. We have military
9 flyway issues out there. And we have competing
10 interests from solar and wind on the same ground, so a
11 number of issues coming out as we scope this proposal.

12 The first of the public scoping meetings
13 will be with the Tembi-Sha Shoshone in Death Valley on
14 the 14th of September at 2 p.m. We will then travel
15 to Lone Pine to the Boulder Creek Camp Ground and hold
16 another public meeting that night from 5:00 to 9:30.

17 On the next night on the 15th in Bishop at
18 the fair grounds, Home Ec Building there. And then on
19 the following night after that, 16 September, I
20 believe that's a Wednesday, it might be a Thursday. I
21 can tell you it's the 16th. We will be at Ridgecrest
22 and it will be at the Kern McKee Center from 5:00 to
23 9:30 on that night.

24 The next biggest thing we have going right
25 now, we just finished up a steering committee meeting

1 yesterday for the Barren Ridge Transmission Line
2 Project. It's a renewable energy transmission line
3 project that goes from just about Jawbone Canyon down
4 to the Angeles National Forest. It's a five-pronged
5 portion. The first portion of it is to set a new line
6 so that the old 230 kV line can be taken out of
7 service and reconductored and then put back into
8 service. A new 230 kV line would then double capacity
9 for bringing energy out of the Tehachapi Mountains
10 areas down to L.A.

11 A second portion of that project is to
12 reconductor the lines from the Haskell Canyon to
13 Rinaldi Substation. Yet a third portion is to hang a
14 set of conductors on a vacant position on a four-
15 position line that runs from Castaic to Pyramid Lake.
16 A fifth portion of this project will be doing some
17 remediation and extension of the new substation that
18 was built up by Pine Tree Canyon.

19 This transmission line touches on four
20 sections of BLM ground. Probably less than one and a
21 half miles total of it falls on BLM. There is 45 or
22 50 miles that goes across private grounds until it get
23 to the Angeles National Forest and 13 miles of this
24 line that goes through the Angeles National Forest.
25 So we are a cooperating agency with the Forest Service

1 and LADWP in creating an EIR/EIS.

2 Our technical reports have been done this
3 summer. We are in the process right now of refining
4 alternatives to carry forward to our EIS. We expect
5 that that EIS will come out in draft comment from the
6 public about November or December of this year. It
7 could be as late as January of 2010, but we are hoping
8 to have it out before Christmastime. We expect we
9 will finish our EIS/EIR and come to a Decision Record
10 about June or July of next summer. And then all being
11 equal, we would like construction to begin at 2011.
12 Probably take until 2013 to complete the project, and
13 we are hoping to turn lights on in L.A. in 2014.
14 That's kind of a nutshell where we are with the Barren
15 Ridge Project.

16 We have a host of other things going on.
17 As far as solar and wind, I think most of those are
18 going to be covered in Greg's update come tomorrow, so
19 I won't steal his thunder.

20 Mine hazards-wise, you all were made well
21 aware, I'm sure, fairly recently about the issue of
22 arsenic at Red Mountain, where we discovered that we
23 had 13,000 parts per million arsenic at tailings that
24 were immediately adjacent to the highway and several
25 dangerous features there that we took direct remedial

1 action on. We set over 6,000 foot of chain link fence
2 around the Kelly Mine. We have remediated
3 approximately 100 dangerous features out there in the
4 last year, and we are continuing to work on dealing
5 with medical monitoring for people in the area,
6 gathering information for what is called ATSDR, the
7 Agency for Toxic Substances and -- can you help me?

8 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: Disease
9 Registry.

10 MR. GUM: Disease Registry. We have
11 been working with them to classify this arsenic
12 problem and to get a handle on it. That's also spread
13 to other areas.

14 You will see that we have the same kind of
15 problem down around Mojave with the Standard Hill
16 Operation, the Tropico Hill Operation, the Cactus Mine
17 down there, the Golden Queen Mine down there. We have
18 similar problems as you go to Homewood Canyon. The
19 ARRA money that Mr. Borchard has referred to has given
20 us money to set fences. We are also moving into
21 Darwin. And in Darwin, rather than it being arsenic
22 as a main issue, that was a lead/silver/zinc complex,
23 so we have high concentrations of lead and zinc.

24 So we have various and sundry of those
25 kinds of issues we are dealing with across the

1 Ridgecrest resource area.

2 Now, physical features-wise, this year we
3 have probably -- we've done 22 to date. That was true
4 in June. I'm here to tell you today that we are past
5 60 dangerous features that we have remediated so far
6 this fiscal year. And before the end of September we
7 are going to get another 43 right adjacent to Rand
8 Mine, so we will have over 100 of those done in this
9 fiscal year, dangerous features. And we have done
10 everything from installing polyurethane plugs to
11 putting in bat gates to installing cupolas. We have
12 backfilled quite a number, and we should be moving
13 forward to try to reduce those features that are
14 especially near places of residences, cities and towns
15 and in open play areas.

16 The next thing -- oh, I guess we need to
17 talk a little bit on grazing permit renewals. In 2007
18 and 2008, we completed 22 out of 32 grazing permit
19 renewals. They were lumped into four different
20 groupings, and three of the 40 areas were appealed to
21 the IBLA. We are still in the process of waiting for
22 whatever decision comes back from IBLA. Here in 2009
23 we have completed nine of the other ten permits that
24 were up for renewal, and we believe that we are going
25 to get the last one done here before we get out of

1 this fiscal year, so stayed tuned.

2 You have been able to read and know about
3 Surprise Canyon and Furnace Creek. A number of
4 comments, particularly on Furnace Creek. I think we
5 generated more than 10,000 comments from interested
6 folks in regard to this road issue going through
7 Furnace Creek, and that has led us down the tortured
8 paths of revision and revision and revision. As of
9 yet, I think we are still kind of in the revised mode
10 and we don't have an updated document at this point of
11 time to be able to hand to you for further review.

12 We had this program that you guys
13 contributed to, and I think I must have left the thing
14 on my chair. It was called the Land Management Area
15 Education and Permit Program and Interim ACEC Closure
16 Rescission. There was a TRT from this group that
17 helped study problems out in our Rand area, and they
18 came up with this permitting and education process.
19 And in this past year we now have instituted this
20 program that gives riders that come into an area all
21 kinds of wonderful data about the area, complete map
22 of all the approved routes throughout the Rands. And
23 they have to come in and get this permit before they
24 can go out there and legally ride. If our rangers
25 stop you and you don't have this with you, I think

1 they send you to Bakersfield, and we know what that
2 means.

3 So it's a tough deal. But to date, we have
4 handed out more than 12,000 of these so far. We have
5 targeted several weekends throughout the year, our
6 highest use weekends to where we have had a whole
7 cadre of rangers and staff people that have gone and
8 manned each and every one of the entry points to this
9 area. And all the people that come out on their bikes
10 have got to go through, funneled into an area to make
11 sure that they have a permit, passed the test, and
12 they know what is going on in the area. I think it's
13 pretty good as far as greater compliance.

14 If you talk with Mr. Waldheim, I'm sure he
15 will be able to identify a place or two that we seem
16 to have the same group of users that like to violate,
17 and we are currently working on a method to try to
18 catch them. So just to let you know this has been a
19 good working thing.

20 This year we have restored -- we've had our
21 SCA crews come back around. We've had more than 121
22 sites restored, OHV access trails. Within our area
23 we continue to monitor those areas to make sure we
24 don't have repeat offenses after we've gone in and
25 done reclamation in the area. We have worked both in

1 the Beverage Ridge Cabin this year in the wilderness,
2 and we have another old shack that's way high up above
3 in the Inyos above Lone Pine that we have also done
4 some remediation on -- through our wilderness programs
5 this year.

6 Maintenance-wise, we have done restoration
7 or maintenance to more than 300 miles of trail. And
8 we have had any number of things we are kind of proud
9 of that we've worked on with volunteers and
10 internally, everything from lining boulders on
11 accesses into wilderness areas to help eradicate that
12 problem, to removing graffiti at the Trona Pinnacles.
13 We are finishing a project at the Goldbug Mine site.
14 This mine site was a mine about three-quarters of a
15 mile from Cerro Coso Community College and a popular
16 play area in Ridgecrest. It's a popular area for
17 mountain biking, for hiking. It's also an ACEC, and
18 we had this old mine from back around the turn of the
19 century with seven dangerous shafts. The shafts
20 provide habitat for Thompson Bat, some other critters
21 in the area, so we had to do something proactive.

22 We got together with the local Boy Scout
23 troops in the area, and we were able to devise eight
24 different Eagle Scout projects that dealt with turning
25 that site into an interpretive site where we can show

1 all levels of bat habitat, A-B-C-D. We use it as an
2 on-the-ground place for people that are learning about
3 abandoned mine remediation to see what can be done,
4 different ways of making these things safe. We are
5 sending information about the historic nature of the
6 mine itself. We have developed a walking path through
7 the area. We will have interpretive panels and
8 benches, a really nice thing that will give Boy Scouts
9 the Eagle badge for. We are real proud of that.

10 We got about 2 and a half million dollars
11 in OHV grants this year. And that's dealing on
12 everything from ground operations, development at
13 Jawbone Station, planning in the El Pasos, various
14 restoration projects. Education and safety projects
15 like Mr. Waldheim had talked about earlier. And so
16 far this year we have issued about 50 special use --
17 recreation use permits in the resource area and we may
18 be a little beyond that.

19 Law enforcement has been active this year,
20 over 200 citations issued. We've got better than
21 50,000 visitor contacts. I think we are still down
22 two positions ranger-wise. I believe that's correct.
23 There's going to be somebody that's going to come up
24 and talk about wild horse and burros, so I won't get
25 into that.

1 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Just one moment,
2 please. Don.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 Mr. Gum, an excellent report. A lot of
6 good things happening in Ridgecrest field office. But
7 I have a request for future reports. I do not see a
8 status report on Kern County's application for right
9 of way for Conklin Road. And I would like to see that
10 included in all future reports to the Council.

11 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Ron.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: You are
13 absolutely marvelous. That was just a small step.

14 You know, really -- and thank you. That
15 was a nice report.

16 Most PO boxes seem to be touching on -- one
17 way or another, on a common issue that's coming out
18 everyplace in the wilderness in Southern California
19 especially, and it's a major public controversy,
20 especially in the San Diego County area and
21 surrounding areas.

22 And that is that Sempra Gas and Electric
23 was found to be the cause of at least three of the
24 major fires two years ago that caused a loss of the
25 hundreds of homes and a few lives and billions of

1 dollars in damage because of the power lines. And so
2 they have proposed and are going to proceed, whether
3 or not anybody likes it or not, shutting off power
4 during peak periods of fire hazard where there are
5 winds and things that could add to the likelihood of a
6 fire being started by power lines. And that's being
7 challenged in court. It's being challenged with the
8 PUC. Sempra Gas and Electric is persistent, I think
9 as a result of the fines that are being levied against
10 them for being the causal point of the previous fires.

11 So two questions arise from that and have
12 been a major source of controversy in public hearings
13 in San Diego. One is what happens with public safety
14 and people that are relying upon that power who can't
15 afford -- or their lives could be injured or
16 threatened when the power is shut down for a period of
17 time. And Sempra Gas and Electric's answer is, well,
18 we will try to remediate that, but we have to stop the
19 fire problem and hazard.

20 So therefore, if that's the case and there
21 is a greater fire hazard because of these power lines
22 and there doesn't seem to be a move afoot to
23 underground these lines, what will the upgrading of
24 these new lines going through the forest lands in the
25 Ridgecrest office and in other field offices, what is

1 that going to do in terms of the effective increase or
2 decrease in risk of fires in those areas because of
3 this?

4 MR. GUM: I don't know the answer to
5 your question. I can tell you some of the things that
6 we are doing on the transmission line project that I'm
7 working on. We do have fire plans that we are
8 developing for the entire route of the transmission
9 line. We rely upon the engineering that's provided by
10 those experts that are involved in the construction
11 and installation of these things. LADWP has no desire
12 to create a fire. I'm absolutely 100 percent of that.
13 I'm sure the Forest doesn't want to have a fire on the
14 forest lands. I'm sure that residents in the area are
15 not looking forward to having a fire as a result of
16 some cataclysmic incident.

17 We can't engineer to guarantee that an
18 accident will never occur, whether it's above ground
19 or whether it's underground. But to kind of answer
20 your question a bit as how come we haven't done an
21 underground look/see, we have done that. And there
22 are a couple of things that come out in the analysis.
23 One is that the increased surface disturbance as a
24 result of that undergrounding activity is
25 astronomically greater than what it is when we string

1 lines and have long expanses, half mile, three-
2 quarter mile expanses.

3 In many ways I believe that undergrounding
4 could render a project that was otherwise economic to
5 subeconomic status because of the number of things
6 that you must deal with, cultural resources just one.
7 Biological resources, another. Relocation of
8 facilities yet another. So it gets to be quite
9 complex. And I'm not exactly sure how to be able to
10 tell you we are going to be able to stop all fires. I
11 don't think we can.

12 But I think that having a plan as we have
13 gone through this process to where at any given point
14 we have staged areas that are established. We have a
15 plan in mind. What happens if we have a fire breakout
16 here or there -- we are trying to address that to the
17 best of our ability.

18 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think people are
19 looking like they need a break. And I do want to pick
20 this up. Let's take a break right now and try to move
21 briskly when we get back.

22 (Brief recess was taken from 3:07 to 3:32 p.m..)

23 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: We had a couple of
24 questions that remain with Ridgecrest, and I would
25 like to kind of move quickly so we can get the next

1 offices in.

2 MR. GUM: If I may answer a couple
3 things we asked before we broke. One was did we have
4 any information in regards to what happens if the
5 utility decides to shut off power.

6 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think we answered
7 that.

8 MR. GUM: And the other, Lloyd wanted me
9 to put a plug in for the SCA crews that have been out
10 working hard for us this year and doing all of our
11 trail restoration, campsite restoration. And indeed
12 we couldn't do what we do without them. These are
13 young folks that come through the Student Conservation
14 Association. They are folks that oftentimes are in
15 between deciding whether or not they are going to
16 finish their degrees and they are kind of floundering
17 in life. They get hooked up with the Student
18 Conservation Association, and they send them out to
19 us. And we put them to work and we had have had great
20 success with these young kids, so we do need to give
21 them kudos.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Just talk a little
23 bit about that major restoration work around the
24 Beveridge Ridge Mining District accomplished by the
25 BLM and the SCA in restoring at least one cabin.

1 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: If anybody has a
2 cell phone -- I failed to do this at the beginning of
3 the meeting -- if you have a cell phone, would you
4 please turn it off and try to refrain from texting or
5 sending out voice mails. We want everybody's focus.
6 Go ahead.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I had a
8 question. I had a question on the Rand Mountains
9 Management Area permit program. That's supposed to
10 be -- I understood that that was going to be moved to
11 a fee program at some point in the future. What is
12 the status of that?

13 MR. GUM: I honestly don't know. Hector
14 should be here tomorrow and/or later this evening, and
15 you might be able to ask him that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I saw him in
17 the lobby.

18 MR. GUM: You did? We will have to ask
19 him that question.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I will ask him
21 questions when I see him.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: You show
23 that you have the grants from the State already, from
24 the State Parks, or are you thinking it will be
25 funded?

1 MR. GUM: The last I saw, we thought we
2 were going to get funding on all the grants. I don't
3 know whether or not we have. I was coached to the
4 fact it looks like it was going to be good on all of
5 them.

6 MR. WALDHEIM: We are okay for this year
7 on the grants. Those are in the next -- the BLM is
8 going to start getting their money October 1. The
9 only problem is the money has to be spent before you
10 can get reimbursed. So we need to figure out a way to
11 ask for an advance. But this year's money is okay.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: And the
13 reason I ask involves a lot of things here. A lot of
14 federal land, including BLM, border state property and
15 the parks are going to close 100 parks, and we are
16 going to find out what parks those are after Labor
17 Day.

18 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Thank you, Jim.
19 Randy.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: First is a
21 question. Regarding mine remediation and the
22 hazardous material cleanup, Ridgecrest seems to have
23 this many or more of these projects in their district.
24 Are there any others in the other districts? And why
25 is the Ridgecrest field office so blessed with this

1 problem? But mining is all over the desert.

2 MR. GUM: That's true. The State of
3 California's Abandoned Mine Land Unit through
4 Department of Conservation went out and did an
5 inventory across California, they found 47,000
6 dangerous features they felt was worthy to put on a
7 list and say something needs to be done about them.
8 The vast preponderance of those features fall between
9 Ridgecrest and Barstow field offices.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: The Phase 2 of
11 the Rand Mountains Permit Program, Dick, the Phase 2
12 has been stalled for a couple of reasons. One, the
13 lead project person is no longer there to work on that
14 to help us through. And the second reason is that we
15 have been unable to provide guidance from the TRT, as
16 the TRT has been disbanded. And so at this stage the
17 project hasn't moved forward.

18 But I will say, if I might, I would like to
19 thank Kern County for its role in funding the maps and
20 the permits were used in this first phase. Without
21 that, we wouldn't have been able to get that off the
22 ground. And folks wouldn't be enjoying those trails.
23 So thanks again to Kern County.

24 If I may just -- another point? Regarding
25 the Rands, I spoke earlier about a goal of mine to

1 create a database of routes that could be downloaded.
2 To explain that this is not something that's way down
3 the road, we have already processed a set of data from
4 the BLM's Ridgecrest office, route data, and processed
5 it into a series of downloadable GPS files available
6 through the Friends of Jawbone Web site. As it
7 stands, you can go to the site and download the
8 electronic routes into your GPS and follow those lines
9 and know you are remaining on the trail. So we have
10 used that as a pilot program to test out how this data
11 exchange could work. So thanks for standing there
12 while I spout off.

13 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I think we are good
14 there. Thank you, good report. Let's move on to
15 Barstow, please.

16 MS. TROST: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman
17 and Advisory Council. My name is Roxie Trost and I'm
18 the field manager for the Barstow field office. And I
19 have a couple of things that weren't on the report
20 that I would like to update you on briefly.

21 First one is I would like to thank
22 Supervisor Mitzelfelt for his insight in the
23 Programmatic EIS for filming. Barstow field office
24 was involved with Shari Davis in the Request For
25 Proposal. And the contractor is now on board and

1 working on that EA. It's a Programmatic EA.

2 Also, our priority in the Barstow field
3 office, as well, has been renewable energy. And about
4 half of our staff is working on that project. They
5 are actually going to be for the next two weeks
6 together working on about 18 plans of development. We
7 have several projects that have already gone through
8 the Notice of Intent or are in the NEPA process. And
9 that's the Stirling Solar One Project, the Chevron
10 Project and Granite Wind. And that's where those
11 three particular project are at this time.

12 Another project we are with working on and
13 posted to our Web site is the Desert Tortoise
14 Translocation Environmental Assessment, and that is
15 open for public comment until August 31. And we
16 anticipate that we will be reissuing a revised
17 Environmental Assessment based on some of the public
18 comments we have been receiving. So if you get a
19 chance to look at that, what that does is actually
20 translocates tortoises from the western expansion area
21 of Fort Irwin onto public land and some within the
22 southern expansion area, as well. About 89 tortoises.
23 So you can take a look at that or I can bring copies
24 of it for you, if you would like.

25 Barstow is also the lead on several large

1 EIS's besides the renewable energy. We are currently
2 working on the Cal-Nev Pipeline Project, which is from
3 Rialto to Las Vegas, underground pipeline. We are the
4 lead office on Desert Express, and we are also the
5 lead office on the Marine Corps expansion project.

6 I know you are expecting some sort of
7 update on that particular project. We have been
8 working with the Marines directly. They are a little
9 bit behind schedule, and we just have some preliminary
10 documents, Chapters 1 and 2, that have a deadline of
11 actually Monday for us to complete that review. So we
12 have staff in our office taking a look at that. So I
13 don't know what the revised time line is going to be
14 at this time.

15 Those are the things that weren't on my
16 list. Do you have any specific questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Just on the
18 tortoise. Will the BLM supervise any of the tortoise
19 relocation so they have possibly a better result than
20 the Army did with relocating in Fort Irwin?

21 MS. TROST: There is a tortoise team put
22 together that will do the monitoring. BLM is part of
23 that team. But a lot of the USGS researchers, Fish
24 and Wildlife Service also. It's a coordinated effort
25 with Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS and the BLM.

1 Fish and Game is also a part of that.

2 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any other
3 questions? Randy.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Thank you for
5 moving forward on the signing, particularly the one up
6 in Superior Cronese area and the Fremont Kramer
7 district. Those are some of the best back country
8 opportunities for the public, one of the best route
9 networks as well up in that area. And it's really
10 great that the public will be able to know where they
11 should be encouraged and need to stay on the roads.

12 I would also, if I could, see if there
13 could be focus into the areas surrounding the Afton
14 Canyon ACEC. There were significant route revisions
15 in the WEMO process, the Cady Mountains, the northern
16 area of the Cady Mountains, the Wilhelm Wash area and
17 down through Hidden Valley and Broad Lake area. That
18 area hasn't been touched on, and I would still like to
19 keep that on the list, as well.

20 MS. TROST: Yeah, I appreciate that,
21 Randy. We have four areas that crews are currently
22 out working on. We are wrapping up some of our
23 restorations projects of the previous OHV grants. And
24 Afton Canyon, Coal Guardy (as pronounced), Juniper
25 Flats and Edwards Bowl are the four areas that those

1 crews have been focused on throughout the summer.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: Did the
3 Marines ever report back to you on how many people
4 actually made comments?

5 MS. TROST: Yes, they pulled together
6 for us a scoping report. So I think they projected
7 there were several hundred comments that they sorted
8 through.

9 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Do you have any
10 other questions for Barstow? I think we are good.
11 Thank you. Nice report. Let's move on to Needles,
12 please.

13 MR. AHRENS: Mike Ahrens, recreation
14 wilderness chief, Needles, California. Our field
15 manager, Rusty Lee, extends his greetings. He is on a
16 previously-planned and very well-deserved vacation.

17 So I will try to be brief. We did submit a
18 report -- I apologize -- a little late, so I hope you
19 guys got it timely enough to be able to review.

20 Just to say that you can see we are pretty
21 proud of what is going on in our field office in the
22 way of interpretation and signing. Interpretation is
23 kind of a specialty we have. We have a gentleman in
24 our office, Murl Shaver, who is an overly motivated
25 and very clever young man. We found if we couple him

1 and OHV funds together, children get taught
2 everywhere. So that's what we've got going. And we
3 are happy with how that has been going.

4 Working on route signing. Completed a
5 couple of different areas down by the Whipple
6 Mountains Wilderness and up and around the Sacramento
7 Mountains right outside of Needles and currently don't
8 have any actual crews working right now, but our two
9 maintenance guys are working in the north county where
10 it's cool. It's 112. So working on routes a couple
11 days a week.

12 Let's see. A report -- here you can also
13 find we are working on renewable energy as well. To
14 give you a little bit of an overview of the projects,
15 we are working on the big one, which is the ISEGS
16 project in the Ivanpah Valley. It's moving along
17 swimmingly. And working towards now a completion of
18 the Administrative Draft on that. I don't have an
19 exact time line on it, but I know the CEC, our partner
20 in that, is very much swiftly working on that. Hoping
21 to have their final staff assessment which will mirror
22 our Draft EIS out very soon. So hopefully we will get
23 to be seeing that soon.

24 What else is good here? Continuing to work
25 on our grazing renewals as well. Folks seem at the

1 moment mostly on the Horsethief allotment and the
2 restoration and protection of the springs and waters
3 in the area. Wanted to get that into a little better
4 condition and do that work prior to completing the
5 allotment renewals just so that work will be done and
6 wouldn't cloud that process. So that's going well.
7 We are scheduling some crews to come do that fencing
8 and weed eradication at the same time and hope to see
9 that done by the end of the fiscal year.

10 Also working on some abandoned mine lands
11 programs and have projects working in the South
12 Whipple Mountains and the Sacramento Mountains outside
13 of Needles and along Old Woman Mountains Wilderness
14 and a couple of different vicinities over there.

15 I did want to offer -- you asked about our
16 staffing. A couple of comments in regards to that.
17 One phenomenon I think all of our offices are
18 experiencing, actually broader than just Southern
19 California is the current economy and housing market
20 has made it incredibly difficult, especially for one
21 reason or another, our seasonal staff to be able to
22 move and relocate. It takes the motivation certainly
23 away to want to be able to do that. It makes it that
24 much more difficult to find more seasoned, experienced
25 staff.

1 We recognized that last year and have kind
2 of switched gears a little bit and made the decision
3 to actually try to go after younger staff, and
4 frankly, kind of grow some staff in our field offices.
5 So we have actually had a pretty fair success bringing
6 staff on. We are just about at a full T-O I think
7 now, but it means that we have to do a lot of training
8 and instruction, so in a way it certainly helps. We
9 are getting things going and done, but it means things
10 just go a little slower as we work through that
11 training and instruction kind of process.

12 The other kind of conundrum we are dealing
13 with as well, as big as the alternative energy program
14 is -- and I think we can see that going for quite some
15 time -- it does still have an end point somewhere. So
16 there is this constant balancing measure between using
17 full-time -- hiring permanent staff with ultimately
18 soft money and trying to find a balance where that
19 makes sense.

20 So we are also using some contracting and
21 what have you in kind of a cadre of approaches to try
22 to do that so as not to end up breaking the bank, so
23 to speak. I think that's all I really had to share.
24 I will try to answer any questions.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Yeah, Mike. On

1 this PG&E Trilobite facility that you mentioned here
2 that's going to be east of Amboy, is that going to be
3 in the Feinstein -- would that be associated with the
4 Feinstein bill?

5 MR. AHRENS: I believe it would be
6 within that area. Yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I know where
8 Amboy is, and it seems like east of the Amboy is out
9 there in that area.

10 MR. AHRENS: Right, very much so.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Mike, you
12 didn't touch on it, but on the five grazing allotments
13 that are considered for relinquishment, can you tell
14 me a little about them?

15 MR. AHRENS: Probably not the person to
16 give you details on each one.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: The names of
18 them?

19 MR. RAZO: Tomorrow. He will be briefed
20 on that tomorrow.

21 MR. AHRENS: We will have a full on that
22 tomorrow.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: I will save the
24 rest of the my questions for tomorrow.

25 MR. AHRENS: Thank you.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: The Trilobite, are
2 these transmission lines going to affect the Trilobite
3 Wilderness -- like the Marble Mountains?

4 MR. AHRENS: I have not heard anything
5 to that effect.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: The name is
7 Trilobite, and I thought --

8 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: We cannot
9 put transmission lines into those areas. No way.

10 MR. AHRENS: It would be an easy one.

11 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Good questions.
12 Mike, thank you. Did a nice job. Appreciate that.
13 Okay.

14 So now we are going to move on to the Union
15 Pacific Railroad, and we have a representative? Would
16 you please come up and state your name, please.
17 Names.

18 MS. VALDEZ: It's names. Good
19 afternoon, Chairman, and Members of the Council. Lupe
20 Valdez. I'm the director of public affairs for UP for
21 Southern California. Southern California for us means
22 everything south of Santa Barbara to the Mexican
23 border, so you have an idea of the magnitude in terms
24 of the area we cover. I'm here with Andrew Gonzales,
25 who is our director of track maintenance in case there

1 are questions regarding the fence, the sand fence.

2 I have to start by saying I apologize to
3 this group because we should have probably been here a
4 year and a half ago while there were communications
5 going on. And the BLM staff has been wonderful to
6 work with. I personally should have visited this
7 group to give you an idea of why we were doing what we
8 were doing and how we were going to go about doing it.

9 For those of you who don't know, we built
10 this fence because of the ongoing issues we had with
11 sand coming into the track bed. Any time you have
12 that, it's detrimental to the actual framework of our
13 track and the stability of our track. And Andy can
14 describe for you the specifics if you have technical
15 questions.

16 But the whole point of this fence was not
17 to be the mean old railroad, to take people off the
18 Wash Road, although I talked to many people who
19 thought I was. It was to protect the integrity of the
20 operations in there. And knowing we have an issue
21 with sand and obviously we are in a sandy area, this
22 is the way that we have seen recently that has been
23 extremely successful in other parts of the country
24 with regard to minimizing the amount of sand. It's
25 impossible to completely not have an ounce of sand on

1 the tracks. But the more activity in the sand dunes,
2 that means the more sand gets blown about. So this
3 was seen as a way to be able to do that.

4 The sand fence as it stands right now, we
5 have worked with BLM staff. They are now in the
6 throes of doing the alternate route so that the
7 recreational users can use an alternate route and
8 won't have to be on the Wash Road and will still be
9 able to access their areas. My understanding of the
10 time frame is such that their road should be completed
11 before the heavy-duty season starts in October.

12 And we will continue to work closely
13 together to make sure that we are in coordination with
14 each other in terms of the new road going into place.
15 And I wanted to mention also that there are currently
16 gaps in the fence if any of you have seen it along the
17 washes. Those will continue to be that way. Those
18 will not be closed off, those gaps. And that is
19 something that's going to continue to be that way for
20 the tortoise. So that's why those gaps are being
21 left, and the washes, obviously, that are there now.

22 At this point in time, again, we are in
23 communication with BLM staff in terms of their
24 project, and by all accounts, we believe that the
25 road -- we have been told that the road will be ready

1 to go when peak season starts up in October.

2 Future plans for this area. I get a lot of
3 questions asked. At one point there was -- UP was
4 moving quite quickly in terms of developing a second
5 track going through the area. The economy put the
6 kibosh on a lot of our plans, including that one for
7 the time being. So right now we are not at this
8 point -- we have future plans to do a double track
9 through this area, but right now all of that has been
10 put on hold because of the economy.

11 So when the economy picks up, I will come
12 back to this group to talk about what those plans are
13 and to give this group a briefing on the double track.
14 But I wanted to mention that because that was
15 something that other communities were talking about
16 before. And right now we pretty much put on the shelf
17 any project to the double-track this area until and
18 when the economy picks up, which it will, but we all
19 have different crystal balls and so far my crystal
20 balls are out a few years.

21 What you will see probably in 2010 for
22 those of you visiting that area, we'll be cleaning up
23 and replacing some of the ballasts, which is the
24 little rock you find up on the track bed, because we
25 need to clean it and replace some of it if it's been

1 damaged beyond repair. So there are specific
2 requirements for this ballast, and while it looks like
3 to you and I probably simple rock, there are specific
4 requirements for the type of ballast we use and how
5 clean it needs to be to support our track structure.

6 So I want to mention that to this group
7 because it won't be until 2010, but I will communicate
8 with Steve Razo as well as Ms. Wood to make sure you
9 are aware we are doing the work in the time frame.
10 You will see activity out there in terms of on the
11 tracks.

12 And with that, Andy, I don't know if you
13 want to say anything.

14 MR. GONZALES: As far as she is talking
15 about the activity out here, which you will see in
16 2010, we will be replacing ties and doing a process
17 called undercutting, which will basically remove all
18 the ties from the roadbed and put clean ballast down.
19 And this is due to the off-road activity which has
20 really caused extensive tie deterioration, and we will
21 be remediating this year in the first quarter of 2010.

22 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Before you go
23 there, I have just a general question. The right of
24 way for the railroad, is that a fee ownership or is
25 that by license to the BLM -- from the BLM?

1 MR. GONZALES: I'm not sure about that,
2 Tom. We can find out.

3 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Steve said you own
4 the property.

5 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: It's fee.

6 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: The next question:
7 Does the BLM have some jurisdiction in overseeing the
8 project from a human perspective, because there is
9 some side effects to the Imperial Sand Dunes.

10 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: The ballast
11 maintenance? No.

12 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: So this is entirely
13 on their own. Do you folks conduct your own
14 environmental assessment?

15 MR. GONZALES: Yes, we do. And any
16 permitting issues due to the Desert Tortoise or
17 anything else out there, we have our own either
18 contract or in-house environmental staff that handles
19 those issues and works with whatever agencies are
20 required.

21 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Folks trying to get
22 across the railroad, obviously they are not supposed
23 to do that. There are places they do. Are those
24 trestle bridge structures?

25 MR. GONZALES: Culverts and a couple

1 they use for ingress and egress out of that.
2 Apparently there is a bar on the other side of the
3 tracks down there. That's not going to be impacted,
4 and I understand an employee of the establishment had
5 been digging out underneath there to allow the ATV's
6 to get underneath there. Those box culverts will be
7 changed to the type where they will not be able to
8 drive ATV's through them, so eventually that access
9 will be blocked and they'll have to go around through
10 the highway.

11 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: So you currently
12 have existing land rights that would accommodate the
13 second --

14 MR. GONZALES: Yes, that's correct.

15 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: I would like to
16 open it up to Richard first.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I spend a lot
18 of time down there, so I have a couple of questions.
19 You tell me you are going to leave that wash 10, the
20 one where we do most of the undercrossing? That's
21 still going to be available to use?

22 MR. GONZALES: Yes, you know, it's not
23 available to use. It's trespassing, so it's not
24 available to use. But it's going to be in place until
25 we do construct the double track.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: You are going
2 to leave the opening where the wash comes out of
3 there. It's going to be left open there?

4 MR. GONZALES: All the openings in the
5 sand fence are at the wash locations and for the
6 Desert Tortoise.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I know you
8 can't -- I know you can't say people can use that, but
9 what is the status of your railroad linkage as far as
10 somebody going over or under that with a motorcycle?

11 MR. GONZALES: As far as we are
12 concerned, it's trespassing. We don't have railroad
13 police out there to monitor the activity 24 hours a
14 day. There were a lot of other things they do, but
15 it's trespassing.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: We know that
17 crossing the railroad tracks on the highway is
18 illegal. That's illegal to cross that way also, so
19 there is really no legal way to access Imperial Sand
20 Dunes Recreation Area from the east side of the
21 railroad tracks. What about crossing like right next
22 to -- what I am trying to get at is where the highway
23 crosses, where 78 crosses, there is a certain area
24 next to it where they can travel on. That's probably
25 gone through the right of way.

1 MR. GONZALES: I don't know other than
2 if you have a nonlicensed vehicle which is probably
3 the case there -- I mean, but that's not our law.
4 It's state law to cross there. But there are no
5 permitted crossings at that location.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: As Lupe said,
7 we have had discussions and most of the people think
8 that the fence was put in just to keep the people from
9 riding through. I would like you to elaborate a
10 little bit on what the sand does to the roadbed so
11 that I can put that out.

12 MR. GONZALES: You bet. What the sand
13 does as it migrates into the track structure, we have
14 a subgrade and the ballast. And the purpose of the
15 ballast in the railroad tracks is a couple of things.
16 It holds the track surface in line so the ties and
17 rails which are fastened together, it helps hold them
18 laterally for resistance. And it also helps keep the
19 surface of the track to where the ballast will
20 distribute the weight evenly of the train coming. You
21 have train cars in excess of 130 tons and pretty heavy
22 tonnage out there right now, probably 95 million gross
23 tons a year, which is very heavy for a single track
24 railroad.

25 And what the sand does is it migrates onto

1 the track. It will go down between the ballast and
2 displace the ballast. And actually, I have a picture.
3 You guys can pass it around here. Some pictures of
4 Glamis here, but it will show -- one picture there
5 shows how the ballast looks like it's dumped full in
6 the track. But the sand has actually displaced all
7 the rock underneath and worked its way up. So we were
8 basically running on a sand bed, not the ballast.

9 What the ballast does when it comes up onto
10 the ties, what it does is it will work up all the
11 spikes on the ties also. It will work up the spikes,
12 and we have a real problem with fastening out there.
13 We have to continually put slow orders on the track
14 due to the deterioration of the ties and of the
15 surface condition out there.

16 So it's really a big burden for us to have
17 the sand locations. Since the late seventies and late
18 eighties when off-road became prevalent out there and
19 this area became more and more used out there, the
20 sand area out there between Glamis and what we call 5,
21 which is about a six-mile section there going south,
22 has really deteriorated to the point where we are
23 having to replace ties every year or year and a half
24 at that location. And this year we are going with a
25 full-blown undercutting project to remove all the

1 sand.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Now this fence
3 only goes six miles down the Clyde, which we say is
4 about Wash 25. BLM is putting in an auxiliary
5 alternate route on BLM land to access these camping
6 areas. This alternate route is going to go down
7 through Wash 25. Now, after that, your fence goes to
8 like Wash 28 right now. So what is going to happen is
9 people going to go -- are you going to put a gate in
10 at 78 to stop people from going on that road?

11 MR. GONZALES: Yeah, we will gate off
12 both ends.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Gate off down
14 at Ogilby Road also?

15 MR. GONZALES: Yeah, right where the
16 sand fence ends.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: So then people
18 can use the right-of-way from the Ogilby end down?

19 MR. GONZALES: That's also trespassing
20 still. We are not advocating the use of it; though,
21 we are not going to do anything at that point there.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Your gate is
23 going to be at the end of the wash fence and going to
24 be at 78?

25 MR. GONZALES: Yes.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I believe
2 that's all my questions, thank you. Wait, I have one
3 more question.

4 The spur for the trash thing, do you know
5 when that is going in?

6 MR. GONZALES: We do have some
7 preliminary plans. I'm not sure exactly the date, but
8 that's going to be coming off right probably this side
9 of the crossing at Glamis.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: It's supposed
11 to come off like about a mile down or something west
12 of the 78.

13 MR. GONZALES: Yes, that's right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: I don't know if
15 you are the engineering, but that's looking at next
16 year for that?

17 MR. GONZALES: I'm not sure about the
18 date on it. I'm the track maintenance director, but
19 it is in the works, I know that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: Okay. Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: This is more of a
23 preliminary question.

24 In the beginning of your presentation, you
25 mentioned that this is the byproduct of OHV

1 recreation. Could you just elaborate a little on
2 that? What is causing this problem? I understand the
3 problem and it's effect on the train. What is the
4 problem? We just kind of missed something here. This
5 is the first time I think the DAC is really getting a
6 presentation on it. Dick is more familiar with it.

7 And number 2, is Clyde what's sometimes
8 referred to as roofen (as pronounced)?

9 MR. GONZALES: I have never heard that
10 before. But the first question you got there, the
11 reason it's a problem there with all the ATVs and all
12 the usage in there is because it stirs up the sand.
13 All the plants in that area are pretty much gone.
14 There are no more native plants there, just sand
15 dunes. And when it gets kicked up -- I have been out
16 there in broad daylight and it's hard to see because
17 of the clouds of sands. Hundreds and hundreds of
18 vehicles at the same time going up and down the sand
19 and picking it up and the wind blowing and you have
20 clouds and clouds of sand. And it's all migrating
21 straight across there onto the tracks. In areas where
22 it's not heavily used, you will see a marked
23 difference in the sand migration.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: The deterioration
25 of the tracks, it's a by-product of the migrating

1 sand?

2 MR. GONZALES: That's correct. Due to
3 the sand on the tracks. Very abrasive.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: As far as way
5 north of the dunes up along Mammoth Wash there, you
6 have planted trees up there years ago. Was that
7 essentially to solve the same issue?

8 MR. GONZALES: Yes, that's really
9 basically in the past, the best way that the railroad
10 engineers had. We still maintain several areas,
11 especially down in Palm Springs, very effective in
12 keeping sand down, Tamarisks.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: That caused the
14 same issues with the sand in there and it migrates and
15 vibrates and --

16 MR. GONZALES: Yes, that's correct.

17 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: A real quick
18 question here.

19 Does the BLM have any access needs or
20 desires to the other side of the railroad long-term?
21 This is to the El Centro office, Vicki. Is that an
22 issue? Is that something that you seek in the future?

23 MS. WOOD: It is an issue for all the
24 things they have been saying because it's trespassing.
25 We don't have a way to get legal access. It's their

1 land. And as far as going to the highway, you can't
2 go to the highway unless you are in a licensed vehicle
3 to go on the highway. You can't go by the side of the
4 highway on 78 because CHP will get upset because it's
5 a Caltrans right-of-way and they watch you and ticket
6 for that. We don't have any plans of trying to get
7 legal access across because it's just -- it's unsafe.
8 You don't need to cross railroad tracks. That's a bad
9 deal.

10 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Right. Where I was
11 going with this, first of all, I wanted to commend the
12 railroad for coming in and sharing this. Realizing
13 that you don't have -- we don't have a right to demand
14 anything from you. We are only advisory, and you have
15 your land right. We understand that.

16 But the reason I pondered that question was
17 is that in good will, there are opportunities,
18 perhaps, to consider alternate uses on both sides of
19 the property that you do own to facilitate access for
20 the public. And I realize you are going to put up a
21 fence and you need to do that.

22 So I just wanted to set forth that as kind
23 of a thought and leave it at that. Or if the Council
24 wants to talk about that any further, that's fine.

25 MS. VALDEZ: Can I add one thing to that

1 thought? The Public Utilities Commission in
2 California is one of those who has regulatory
3 oversight over any crossing over any railroad at the
4 railroad. And it's something that they are not very
5 supportive of, even where we have had established
6 crossings, there are diagnostics that are done
7 because, again, they are looking at the safety factor.
8 And where most incidents happen with train versus
9 person, train versus car, normally in California it's
10 at a crossing. So in their minds they see a crossing
11 as an added liability to that danger.

12 Now, mind you, there are things that have
13 happened off crossing. I worked with MetroLink ten
14 years, but that's how the PUC sees it. So if there is
15 any lead agency that wants to look at that, they
16 really need to talk to the PUC because it's real
17 important to get that input. They are real sticklers
18 on that kind of future possibility. So it's just a
19 Hallmark piece.

20 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That's a good
21 point. The CUP regulates your activities and any new
22 construction. And any change in the project scope to
23 accommodate recreation would be costly, too, and they
24 would have to consider that.

25 MS. VALDEZ: The other thing I will tell

1 you, because I receive those complaints, any time our
2 trains are blocked, that also requires horn blowing.
3 For a public or private crossing, it mandates in
4 California for our engineers to blow on their horn.
5 And that's the No. 1 complaint is my engineers blowing
6 their horns. That's the only device they have to try
7 to prevent a situation from happening, and they don't
8 get to close their eyes. They have to keep their eyes
9 wide open and see a lot of stuff that you and I would
10 not want to see.

11 We now have cameras on our locomotives, and
12 it's not easy. So that's the other thing that I
13 just -- nighttime campers, they don't appreciate me
14 blowing my horn through an area. They don't take to
15 that too kindly. So I just mention that because
16 that's a requirement.

17 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Lloyd, you are
18 first.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: I just had a
20 question, not on that area. But UP put a locked gate
21 around Hector Mine Road up that goes into the Cady
22 Mountains. And our organization has Bighorn Sheep
23 water holes, and we have to go 10 miles out of our way
24 now.

25 MR. GONZALES: Lloyd, where is that

1 location?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Hector Mine Road
3 near Ludlow, Highway 40.

4 MR. GONZALES: Are you sure that's not
5 the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Actually, the
7 person that checks that drink area works for
8 Burlington, and he told me it was Union Pacific.

9 MR. GONZALES: Most of the (inaudible)
10 in that area, our subdivision which goes from Yermo to
11 Las Vegas there. And Kelso is the closest where our
12 tracks would run through there.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: You are not in
14 charge of the tracks there?

15 MR. GONZALES: Yeah, through there I am,
16 all the way to Las Vegas. But where you are talking
17 about is the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad
18 there.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GUNN: Would either of
20 you have a card?

21 MR. GONZALES: I would.

22 MS. VALDEZ: I can also give Steve Razo
23 the contract. Believe it or not, I work a lot with
24 the BLM.

25 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Don, you had a

1 question?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: The action you
3 are proposing, is that going to alleviate your safety
4 problem with the sand obscuring your vision and
5 landing on the tracks?

6 MR. GONZALES: It's going to help us.
7 We didn't have a sand fence at that location before.
8 It takes years for the sand to build up to the point
9 it is right now. We are hoping -- this is a newly
10 designed sand fence, and we are really kind of waiting
11 to see if this new design is going to help stop sand
12 beds rather than the previous wooden slat design. We
13 are kind of anxious to let a year or two go by and see
14 how the sand migration is.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MABEN: Hopefully you
16 will update Council at that time.

17 MR. GONZALES: Yes.

18 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: Perhaps an ARRA-
19 funded bridge might be more appropriate in El Centro
20 than in South Park.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: Do you have
22 a business card?

23 MS. VALDEZ: I do. I will pass that
24 out.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: You guys took

1 the crossing out at Clyde. There used to be a
2 crossing there. As part of that sand fence or part of
3 your maintenance, that crossing was removed. Was that
4 just so people wouldn't be using it for getting over
5 there?

6 MR. GONZALES: That was a crossing, you
7 know, for our own purposes for construction. It's not
8 necessary anymore, not needed. Nobody is going to
9 ride on it or any really reason to be using it out
10 there. Really, it's just -- we were using it for the
11 double track construction. And we had I think between
12 Sidewinder Road and Clyde there, I think we had six
13 crossings when we were doing the construction and they
14 have all been removed.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLIDAY: That crossing
16 has been there since the sixties.

17 MR. GONZALES: Yeah, I think at one
18 point somebody did have a deed on that one there. And
19 it's since been given up, and we didn't have any
20 reason to keep it in there.

21 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Okay. I think that
22 concludes our questions. And again, on behalf of the
23 Council here, we appreciate you coming down and
24 sharing your ideas and letting us know. And we look
25 forward to seeing you in the future.

1 MR. GONZALES: Thank you.

2 MS. VALDEZ: Thank you.

3 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Going to give a
4 copy of this to the reporter to include in the
5 minutes. Could you pass that down, Ron, to Judy, the
6 court reporter?

7 MR. RAZO: I have a dinner update.

8 (Off the record discussion concerning
9 dinner plans for the DAC.)

10 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Let's move on to
11 the last item on the agenda. This will be the wild
12 horse and burro update. And it was going to be Amy.

13 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: I can assure
14 you I'm not Amy.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Go get them,
16 Cowboy.

17 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: I will be
18 brief. My name is Jack Hamby. I'm the associate
19 district director, Steve's right hand, left hand, and
20 I get his back when I need to. I was a horse and
21 burro specialist in Nevada.

22 Briefly, Amy sends her apology. She
23 couldn't be here. She has lost 700,000 dollars on
24 paper, so the boss is not letting her out of the
25 office. I can tell you the horse and burro program is

1 short a little on money and long on horses.

2 This year we plan on gathering some burros.
3 We are going to cooperate with Fort Irwin, the Army.
4 They have approximately 40 burros. Some of them
5 aren't behaving themselves, so we are calling them
6 nuisance animals. If you look at a map of the BLM at
7 the district, we have a piece of land we call the
8 Bowling Alley. There is approximately 20 animals up
9 there. They are hanging out in the Owl Hole Spring
10 area. We have been watching them pretty close.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Do you want their
12 names?

13 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Thank you
14 very much. It seems that their favorite watering hole
15 there has gone from 3,000 gallons of available water
16 to 10 gallons, so the animals are starting to move
17 into the park and the military base. And burros and
18 tanks don't mix well. So we are concerned about their
19 health and well-being, so we are going to probably go
20 in and gather the 20 burros in the Elk Springs area,
21 approximately 40 off of Fort Irwin, and there is
22 another group in the Panamints that we would like to
23 gather a few animals down there.

24 We will be hauling them all down to the
25 Ridgecrest facility, which is currently holding a

1 little over 500 animals. And we are getting more
2 every day from Nevada. About 20 burros already that
3 came off of the Parker Dam area. We had one burro hit
4 on the freeway and one vehicle collision that resulted
5 in some injuries to people. The animals were hanging
6 out on the highway, one of which is a pink burro.
7 Really neat looking if you have never seen one.

8 Burros, we like gathering them because
9 burros are highly adoptable. Big ears, big heads and
10 if you'd like one, I will make you a deal.

11 On September 26 the Bureau is going to go
12 all out. We are going to do our Adoption Day across
13 country. Our goal is to adopt out 1,000 animals
14 across the Bureau. We are using a lot of volunteers
15 to help. The Ridgecrest facility will be open, and we
16 are going to place about eight to ten horses, three to
17 four burros over here at -- we have rented a ranch off
18 Sundance Road -- Sundance Ranch off of Pilgrim Road in
19 Redlands. And if anybody would like to take a look at
20 those horses, Steve will provide directions, and we
21 deliver.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Richard
23 might want to have a barbecue.

24 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: We would love
25 to entertain your questions on the horse and burro

1 program.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: You spoke
3 briefly of lack of funding. When you padlock these
4 horses and burros up in pens, like at Ridgecrest, and
5 you try to adopt so many, or you try to adopt them
6 all, I assume --

7 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Yes, we'd
8 like to.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: -- do you have
10 a left-over supply? What do you do with them?

11 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: The Bureau
12 has contracted with several private ranches throughout
13 the Mid West to provide sanctuaries for these animals
14 where they may live happily ever after.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Do you have
16 enough sanctuaries? And also as far as the funding,
17 what is your budget cut? What happens to the animals
18 if you run out of the money to supply feed for them?

19 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Three-part
20 question. We just went out with a contract for new
21 sanctuaries. So I think there were eight bidders the
22 last I heard, so we have available sanctuaries now.

23 Part 2 was what was the money looking like.
24 We did okay coming into '09. There was a little dip,
25 but we made up for it out of our own pocket. Is it

1 enough to do what needs to be done? You need to ask
2 Congress about that.

3 As far as what do we do with the animals
4 when the money runs out, our No. 1 priority is to feed
5 animals. We are hoping that the sanctuaries can take
6 care of themselves. That's why we pay the contractors
7 what we do so that they take care of the animals. So
8 we don't let them starve to death on the sanctuaries
9 or in the facilities. Unfortunately, I think where
10 your question is going is do we stop gathering them
11 off the range? That right now is the 40 million
12 dollar question.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Is the amount
14 of the horses and burros on the range, isn't -- has
15 that been set at a certain level for the different
16 areas.

17 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Yes.
18 Bureauwide we have what we consider an appropriate
19 management level. We are still trying to get there.
20 We are very, very close to getting there.

21 DIRECTOR BORCHARD: It's around 30,000.

22 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Plus or minus
23 3 percent.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: That's
25 Bureauwide, all states.

1 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Yes,
2 Bureauwide.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Not the desert.
4 Thank you, Jack.

5 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: Are there any more
6 questions, Jack? Thank you. That was great. I know
7 you have something else.

8 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Two more
9 housekeeping issues. Let's see. I too would like to
10 weigh in on the staffing issue; however, my boss may
11 take me behind the woodshed later.

12 I'm currently tracking 38 approved
13 positions which we have not been able to fill. Out of
14 a table of organization which provides approximately
15 250 positions total desertwide, we are short 38
16 positions, but 11 positions in our RICO office. We
17 have sent out 10 letters saying congratulations, you
18 have a job down here, we love you, please come down,
19 we would even pay for you to move. I had five people
20 calling me back saying we can't do it. The economy
21 will not allow us to sell our house and move.

22 So we are facing tough times. We spent two
23 days with the Desert Manager's Group in San Diego. We
24 have five sister agencies all experiencing the same
25 thing. So this is a countrywide phenomenon. So I'm

1 spending a considerable amount of time luring people
2 from the State government to try to get them to come
3 to the Bureau. I've even tried to upgrade Forest
4 Service employees. If they offer 9, we offer 11 if we
5 can get them there, signing bonuses, cars -- and we
6 are just -- we are struggling.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RUDNICK: Are you hiring
8 any cowboys?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: I'm not paid
10 well.

11 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That's amazing,
12 because I've got to tell you, we had an accounting
13 position, 486 applicants for an accounting position in
14 San Diego. And we just have a wealth of folks looking
15 for an opportunity, and it seems like BLM is a great
16 place to be.

17 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: I advertised
18 a hydrologist position on five separate occasions and
19 finally on the last time where I said anybody in the
20 world can apply, I had three applicants. So we are
21 working on that.

22 Now, the good news. Everybody has a blue
23 folder. It has your travel stuff in it.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: This is
25 black.

1 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: I'm a guy.
2 Please, please, please fill those out as well as you
3 can with the appropriate information. Give them to
4 Dave. And you have my word that I will put my best
5 person on it and make it her highest priority.
6 Nothing else matters, including Steve's mail -- she
7 will not even do Steve's mail until these get done.
8 So sincerely from the bottom of my heart I want to
9 apologize for a messed up financial system. Many of
10 you have travel vouchers hung up in our system for an
11 inexcusable amount of time.

12 A month or so -- a little over a month ago
13 I finally had enough. I assigned one person. That
14 was her full-time job to get them through the system.
15 Al Stein and I waited for her every day to click out
16 one of your travel vouchers, and Al and I would race
17 to see who could approve it faster. So I can assure
18 you for most of you who have provided us the
19 appropriate information, the check is almost in the
20 mail.

21 DISTRICT MANAGER BORCHARD: We are
22 offering burros in lieu of checks.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GROSSGLASS: Are you
24 buying dinner?

25 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: A couple of

1 you that you are still stuck in the system, I'm sorry.
2 Several of you, I got you out. Randy, yours was
3 jammed up for three days straight. I finally waited
4 until 6 o'clock at night when everyone in the Bureau
5 went home and it clicked through.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FITZPATRICK: I notice
7 there are typos all over the place. That could be one
8 problem. So I'm correcting those in red.

9 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: You have a
10 red pen, that's wonderful. Feel free to correct me at
11 any time you would like. Any other questions,
12 comments, concerns?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: When do we
14 give the folders? Tomorrow?

15 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR HAMBY: Yes. Because
16 you will need to turn in your hotel receipts and any
17 other receipts that you acquired. So don't let them
18 out of your sight. You've got to get them in, and I
19 promise next week, if I'm not picked for jury duty,
20 next week I will personally hand deliver everything to
21 the right person. And that's all she will do.

22 ACTING CHAIR ACUNA: That sounds great,
23 thank you. As we are getting close here, are there
24 any other questions for Jack? Jack, thank you,
25 appreciate your sincerity, and we know you are going

1 to come through for us.

2 I think we are going to wind up the meeting
3 now. I want to thank everyone, the audience, public,
4 BLM for enduring this very warm room. This was very
5 important stuff and tomorrow we are going to have some
6 even more important things to talk about. So with
7 that, are we ready to hear a motion to adjourn.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BANIS: Moved.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSTON: Second.

10 (Voice vote taken and Council adjourned at 4:34 p.m.)
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1 R E P O R T E R ' S C E R T I F I C A T E
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4 I, Judith W. Gillespie, CSR, RPR, a Certified
5 Shorthand Reporter, No. 3710, for the State of
6 California, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages
7 comprise a full, true and correct transcription of the
8 proceedings had and the testimony taken at the public
9 hearing in the hereinbefore-entitled matter of Friday,
10 August 28, 2009.

11 Dated this 6th day of September, 2009, at
12 Riverside, California.
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19 JUDITH W. GILLESPIE, CSR, RPR
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M-O-T-I-O-N-S

- A. Maker: Don Maben
 Second: Randy Banis
 Motion: To approve the meeting notes of
 3/21/09
 Result: Motion carried
- B. Maker: Randy Banis
 Second: Ron Johnston
 Motion: To adjourn
 Result: Motion carried